

I AM;

OR,

**A Narrative of Creation and Sal-
vation Through Redemption
and Restoration.**

BR

125

.R6



Class BR125

Book R6

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

I AM;

OR,

A Narrative of Creation and Salvation Through Redemption and Restoration.

BY
JOHN RING,
HAWARDEN, IOWA.



Chicago, Ill.
S. B. SHAW, Publisher.
212 W. Chicago Ave.
1906

BR125

R6

LIBRARY of CONGRESS	
Two Copies Received	
JUN 2 1906	
Copyright Entry	
<i>Apr 25 1904</i>	
CLASS	XXc. No.
<i>85326</i>	
COPY B.	

Copyright 1904,
By JOHN RING.

FORE-WORD.

Any thoughts reduced to writing and publication, in a certain sense become public property and receive attestation according to the varied judgments and appreciations of the readers. This is expected and can not be avoided, nor would it be for the best if it could. However, any writing largely stands on its own merit, and speaks for itself. The criticisms may be well founded or not, according to different opinions; but the work advocates its own value. No writer should aim to escape this. The writer thinks and writes. Let the reader read and think, and so co-operate in meditation. The first may aid in giving suggestions to the latter.

At the junction of many roads, a guidepost is a necessary aid as an index, and as wise, directing counsel. At a dangerous pitfall or rock in the dark, a signal light is proper to give timely warning to the benighted or befogged traveler. Its service is not altogether estimated by the intrinsic worth, but rather by its wise guidance and warning

constantly given, which becomes of value to the inquirer when he gives proper heed thereto.

Co-operation in meditation arouses latent treasures of the writer and reader. The aim of the one is to point the other to the test, the highest and the noblest in life, and to avoid the contrary, yet leaving the reader to venture in his own mind far beyond verbal expressions.

May the time that the reader devotes to this book not be considered ill spent nor as lost, for want of some good service and aim — is the hope of the writer; for it has a goal to which the thought of the reader is directed.

CONTENTS.

- I. THE EXISTING PROFOUND MYSTERIES.
- II. THE WORLD'S BENIGN LIGHTS.
- III. THE IMAGE OF GOD, MAN.
- IV. THE SUPREME GOD, I AM.
- V. THE TWO CHARACTERISTIC TREES.
- VI. THE PERSONIFIED WORD OF GOD.
- VII. THE BELOVED IN THE GARDEN.
- VIII. THE BRIDE IN THE WILDERNESS.
- IX. THE TWO TESTAMENTS.
- X. THE VICTORIOUS REST AND SLEEP.
- XI. THE WISE CONCLUSION.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.—I Tim. 3:16.

I AM

OR

A NARRATIVE OF CREATION AND SALVATION THROUGH REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXISTING PROFOUND MYSTERIES.

First Corinthians 15 : 51—Behold, I show you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

It is by no means the intention to turn the world of thought from its usual busy course of action, to divert the rivers thereof from their proper channels, to remove the fixed mountain facts from their bases, nor to hoist sails and launch out on a doubtful voyage into an imaginary sea of new ideas. But rather to let the aim be to encourage the joy of a really pleasant journey on the revolving globe as it completes its circle through space, so swiftly, seated by some selected picturesque mountainside, that runs down through some romantic forest to the banks of a peaceful, flowing river, and, during springtime, there dwell at early dawn of the morning, at the noonday's bright glare, and at the evening twilight's beautiful halo — there to muse thoughtfully and to discern the trend of the current of the universe, and to discover the source and stable foundation, while listening to its unmistakable voice of charm, admiration, and astonishment, to the height of all majestic sublimity, though not always fully appreciated nor comprehended

at first, for it requires a great deal of education and training in these times to become able to see the beauty and usefulness of all nature.

It is, however, nature in us to observe nature about us, and to enjoy it to the fullest extent possible; but we may err in judgment as to the best enjoyment. The universe is an ever-interesting reality and a delightful description for our perusal.

The mysteries of the universe are pleasant, difficult tasks for us to undertake to solve with patience, persistence, and enthusiasm. Every step taken forward and upward in this direction helps to clear the way for new development and discoveries which are hailed with joy and satisfaction by us all in general. There is now less ground for doubt and total denial of new possibilities and inroads into the yet undiscovered fields, than ever before. Mysteries are being solved more and more to the adjustment and approval of the general intelligent mind with greater ease than ever before. Mysteries appear to us in different degrees, but usually the most mystified part is connected in some way with something that we are more familiar with and that gives us a clue to trace from the known unto the unknown. This is encouraging to venture into research and attempt development, thereby gaining insight into the more hidden things, until the clouds have all vanished and we dwell in the full brightness of revealed day.

In the nature of things we are often confronted with problems that our intelligence is not able to comprehend at first, much less solve to our own satisfaction. There are component parts whose use are in doubt by us, and forces existing whose power with proper connection united have not yet been discovered nor understood even by the most enlightened. There are possibilities of which we can only imagine at present that will in the near future become actual

realities to the persons who are most inclined to doubt now. This is the experience in the past and we have all good reason to believe it shall continue so to be until knowledge is complete and understanding not failing. We are not satisfied to only doubt the existence of forces and their relation to matter because we can not understand them nor to flatly deny their being, but rather accept them as facts not yet developed to our sense of understanding; while we with patience wait for new results to materialize from keener investigation, the natural outgrowth thereof. Greater efforts are exerted in this direction now than ever before, so we are encouraged to the conclusion that most mysteries will in time be revealed, or at least become adjusted to a closer range and greater satisfaction than at present.

The newly-invented instruments to help in probing and detecting hidden things are materials for a sure foundation on which to build our belief. Our minds accept anything imaginable as possible, based on reason, rather than to resort to doubt the existence of what we can not understand or demonstrate. This is a happy condition for the intellect to work in and a more pleasant field for the spirit of genius to occupy. Our imagination reaches out from present realities to future possibilities with great delight, and enjoys every new theory as it becomes an established fact. The more we can see a connection between the visible and the invisible, the more that harmonious beauty and dependence that really exists in all creation will become clearer.

This is not anything new, for it is just what Paul believed and taught. He says: "I show you a mystery." He does not say, I will fully explain it to your satisfaction; nor does he say that he understands all about it himself. It is, therefore, well for us to do as he did — look at the mysteries and examine them very carefully. By so doing, the mist will gradually disappear, and our vision will be clearer

and more intelligent. Paul believed in mysteries and well should he, for he was a great mystery to himself.

He was mysteriously stopped on his way to Damascus, while in his rage of persecuting the saints; mysteriously converted and called to preach the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles; mysteriously enlightened, guided, and supported by the Holy Spirit during his whole earthly career in God's service, through adversity as well as prosperity. This is not all; for he was mysteriously caught up into the heavens and there saw visions that he could not with human tongue describe and heard sounds that could not be uttered on earth; nor did he know whether he was in the body or away therefrom. But he believed in it as an actual, real, and instructive experience that he went through. He did not in the least doubt these mysteries nor try to explain them away, although unexplainable by him and beyond his full comprehension. They were, however, his own mysteries and he alludes to them all at various times with the greatest delight and satisfaction.

Paul shows how converted sinners bound together in love and Christian church fellowship are united into one body with Christ as its head. This is an indissoluble union and the life-blood in the head is distributed through all the members of the whole body by the action of the loving heart. Each member and function of the body serves the other in some way according to its adapted peculiarity and duty. How beautiful when all is harmony in the body, and the outward actions are but the true expressions of the inner life. Paul also sets forth this union and relation in the likeness of husband and wife who are in spirit and effect one. This Christian life is hid within us and becomes visible to others only as our lives reveal to them that Christ is our inner life, and there dwells the Christian's secret being and hope of future glory. With this new life within

our hearts, we can also say to the world: "Behold! I show you a mystery. I was a great sinner. I have repented thereof. I am converted and am living a new life."

This can not perhaps be fully explained in so many words, nor is it necessary that it should be; for a true and devoted Christian life reveals and explains itself day by day as it lives with whom it deals, and it takes a lifetime to do so, and then it is still a mystery to us all. We are saved by grace and believing on Jesus Christ and fully trusting in His plan of redemption. Thus by faith we lay hold of the new life that is offered us and by the heart accept it of God through Christ Jesus.

Paul deals with these facts without regard to time and partially raises the curtain that obscures the future by showing how mortality shall put on immortality in like manner as the grain falls into the ground and there dies, sprouts, and a new life grows up and appears in a new grain with its previous identity retained, with the same life principle preserved, although transferred to another kernel.

This most beautifully shows the mysterious change we must undergo from this life to the eternal life. It sets forth the close relation of the visible to the invisible existence. This also shows up the absurdity of admitting the one and denying the other. Paul did not do that, but laid the greater stress on the everlasting foundation seen by faith. This assurance therein outweighed all else. He was a man full of courage, zeal, and ambition. His early education and training was the best to be had at his time among his nationality. His devotion thereto and the use he made thereof in after life delineates the proper character of the man as various opportunities were presented. He adhered very closely to what he thought was right and used all efforts to bring it into active observance. He left no influence out that could be brought to bear on what he

set out to accomplish. He was endowed with more than ordinary ability, high intellect, good reason, keen judgment, and apt in argument. This powerful influence was felt very forcibly by the opposing parties to their own defeat. The qualities of his character become more fully manifest as experience adds its glowing worth to his inborn genius. Paul was a wonderful man and his life is a revelation full of rich, ripe, Christian experience among all classes of people. He had a clear insight into human life and nature in detail. His vision was also as bright into the spiritual and its relation to God. The veils of both were removed from his eyes by divine help, to which he always ascribes due credit and reverence.

Life itself, in all its various forms, is a stern reality, but little understood. God, the origin and giver of life, reveals Himself partly through nature, His workmanship, partly through chosen agents, but most completely through the Son of God when He appeared as the Son of Man in due time. We are placed here in the midst of God's creation, endowed with most wonderful faculties for research in relation to matter and force and their harmonious working through the universe, and to delve into all minute and sublime realities therein. This we are invited to do. We have the privilege and opportunity to read and to study nature as an open book full of interesting lessons for us. We not only do this, but devise instruments to aid us to discover the grandeur, majesty, and sublimity of the Creator's work and to detect more fully the unswerving obedience of each formation, from the smallest dust to the largest orb, to the underlying law that governs all. The law of each rests on one common law which was uttered by the Creator when He said, "Be" and in obedience thereto all things in order took their proper places and did their duty.

We can take up any kind or class of objects in the uni-

verse, analyze and dissect them, scrutinize the force that pervades them, follow the trend of its hidden power and we shall eventually be in the presence of the Word that spake in the beginning. Science and research will not be complete until they stand in the Creator's presence and there bend their knees to Him and acknowledge Him as such. It is very interesting to notice how Paul, together with the other apostles, the prophets, and Christ Himself calls our attention to the common earthly things with which we are familiar and then makes a spiritual application thereto and so teaching lessons therefrom.

We are told to consider the lilies of the field, the birds of the air, the fig-tree and the vine, for they represent something similar in the kingdom of God, and in some way reveal His dealing with us and His revelation toward us. The prodigal son, the king's wedding-feast, the men with the talents, offer like illustrations. Those who had been in the habit of catching fish and were acquainted with that occupation were called to be fishers of men. The seed of the sower fell in different soil and produced accordingly. This shepherd-like dealing with His chosen flock is one of the most apt comparisons to the spiritual watchfulness and care for His people.

There are abundance of manifestations among the visible things that offer indisputable evidence of unseen realities and a certain relation thereto, although not always so easily traced nor understood by us. What is wanting is someone to open our eyes and understanding; then shall we see a multitude of powerful evidences to which we are blind now. Even the eye of faith has need of clearer and more exact vision. Paul says: "Behold!" and it is well for us to give heed to those things to which he calls our attention.

We have the essence of all science and knowledge sum-

med up for ages, and improved facilities for verifying the same. All this and every new discovery is a step nearer and a vision clearer to a more beautiful harmony of science, history, and the Bible. Every excavation of an ancient city or place of note bears us out in undisputable testimony in that direction. This is encouraging for those in search of truth and knowledge for they shall eventually arrive at the right conclusion.

There are many persons who delight to look into difficult problems with a view of solving them. Paul was one of these and tried to induce others to do likewise. There is also a mysterious dissolution and disappearance of the visible objects into the invisible realm. This is beautifully shown in the service of sacrifice by the ancients. They stood in the presence of the visible altar, with the wood, lamb, and fire on it, and saw it dissolve and ascend into the invisible space, there to exist in some other form more suitable to that place.

This process holds good in all decomposition and solution only in a slower process. Death itself is nothing else than a transition of our being into the realm beyond; while we may stand by the bedside of our dear friends gazing into that region just a little before us. We all shall go that way or as Paul says, be changed, which is its equivalent. The spirit goes beyond while the earthly clay remains and is assigned to earth. This is a great mystery, which we are often called on to witness.

Mysterious as it is, it remains a solemn fact that we all, sooner or later, must experience. Paul encourages us to look into this matter and make necessary preparations therefor, while means are at hand and before it is too late. While life exists with all its variations, let us not cease to behold its mysteries nor neglect the most important part thereof, to choose the part that shall not be taken from us,

neither in life nor in death. The result will be the unlimited joy of the gratification of our choice.

Usually all mysteries have a connecting part with what we can understand. Enoch was mysteriously taken away, but his living among men and his close walk with God we can in a large measure see into. Noah as a shipbuilder on dry land according to God's direction was a mystery to his generation, but we can better see through it since the ark was the means by which his family as well as himself was saved. Abraham's wonderful experience in life becomes plainer when seen through the eye of righteous faith. Moses's death and burial is surrounded with mystery as well as his whole life but the first by no means does away with the latter, while his life partly explains his glorious, calm, mysterious end. Elijah's ride home in chariots of fire is a mystery but his life is as real and significant, or more so, than any of the other prophets.

The association of the breath of God with earthly clay in the person of Adam is a mystery, but it is more fully explained and exemplified when, for the second time, the Son of God visits earth in person.

The Son of Man began earth's career as a child in the manger and grew to manhood among the common people. He took three of His disciples on top of the mountain of transfiguration and there communed with Moses and Elijah who both had mysteriously been taken away. This proves that mysteries are realities and they exist although not at all times plainly visible to all nor easily comprehended. Enough real is associated with mysteries so as to give us a sure foundation of hope to build on further. Christ came down and lived among us and although He went to the Father when His work was finished, He left the key to the hall of mysteries and sent the Holy Spirit to

help us unlock, walk in, and make us at home in the understanding thereof.

"Behold, I show you a mystery," are Paul's words to us. Usually, all mysteries are interesting to us and what we can not fully understand is admired by us in a high degree. We all take fancy to beauty whether by nature or acquired by men, through education, genius, or skill. The accomplished product of a sculptor, painter, or architect attracts attention universally. That invisible skill that can take a block of marble from its natural state and change it to some statue so beautiful and so real, or can take a canvas and paint a picture so true to life and natural color, is admired by all. We laud and speak with praise of the symmetrical proportions and convenient plan according to which a comfortable house is built. We take note of and enjoy the perfection arrived at by the florist and gardener in their harmonious display of nature's most beautiful growths. We are highly amazed as the astronomer points out the majesty and precision of the heavenly bodies that revolve and complete their circles.

All this we partly see and imperfectly understand for there are mysteries connected therewith that are not yet fully solved. Life expresses itself so differently in each person, and yet it has a strikingly similar identity in all. We know of its existence and are conscious of its powerful results, but the very principle of life is a profound mystery for us to behold. As yet, human skill and research have not been able to find for it a proper solution or explain its connection with matter for a season and final disconnection; yet it is the most interesting study and will produce the most beneficial results.

A person's own work is the best compliment of himself, indeed, the most effective silent eulogy of his whole life. There is a lasting relation between the maker and the prod-

uct of his hands, mind, and heart, no matter how much argument may be produced to the contrary. Our own work is a live revelation of the mystery of life hidden within us and gives us character and manhood. We often make our choice of artisan from the impression of the thing made rather than from the appearance of the producer, who has transferred his mental image to the article made.

There are mysterious facts revealed between things visible and invisible when life's influence receives the proper relation thereto.

In like manner the work of the whole creation, including man, testifies of the Creator and is partly a revelation of Him and His wise plan. From each item in the universe, no matter how small or large, there is a word of praise to the Creator in its own language, although we can not always hear or understand it plainly. There is also a law of order in the whole creation that has nothing but the highest regard for its authoritative giver. The Word that spake, and it was according to the force of His inherent quality, has left His trace among His work. The individuality of each kind is preserved for ages and transferred to a new object of the same class, yet never loses the identity; the will also in like manner retains a lofty sentiment for its maker. This unanswering obedience to the Creator is partly a revelation of life itself which is in the last analysis, an invisible existing reality, whether associated with matter or not.

We carry this element with us in our bodies all through life. We study its movement in ourselves and in others. We feel the effect thereof within us and from others with whom we associate. Yet we do not understand it satisfactorily. Life is defended to the very last by ourselves and sympathizing friends, for life loves life and is set

against everything deadly; and yet we don't know what it really is.

There are marvelous revealed facts concerning life, but life itself is a mystery, and yet we believe in it as the most precious reality about us. Life is a mystery in the way of development, as is evidenced by the many noble lives that have lived and done wonders for humanity's welfare in service, sacrifice, and devotion. History is full of men of high manly character. It is the development of their lives that made them what they are in history and biography. Paul's words hold good here also: Behold! A mystery. How they could live such good, noble lives among such corruption as that with which they often were surrounded. Their lives have a mysterious, noble, high-minded influence on us when we read of them. Let us believe in mysteries and let them have their mysterious effect on us.

CHAPTER II.

THE WORLD'S BENIGN LIGHTS.

Genesis 1:3—And God said, Let there be light.

The earth had no form and was empty of all vegetable and animal life, but wrapped in utter darkness. This is the description given by the Creator before light was brought into existence. A more gloomy, desolate, and irregular state of things we can not conceive of. Indeed, it is a hard matter to grasp the state of things as described. It had nothing of the orderly harmony to make it agreeable to human life and sensation. It was a period and a region into which the human mind can not really enter and form any idea of the state of things, because life could not exist there; and where it can not exist, no clear conception can be reasonably formed or any mental picture be drawn. Let this impress our minds that it was a hideous, awe-inspiring state not in any way fit for life. Amid all this awful gloom and darkness the Spirit moved and caused a streak of light to flash in obedience to the Word: "Let there be light."

Inanimate objects can exist without light, but vegetable and animal life can not. It was therefore necessary before

light could be introduced that light should be brought into existence, thereby making it possible for life to exist, develop, and flourish. The Creator called forth light and with it came all the attending blessings connected therewith. Light and heat are very closely associated with life. They form the proper atmosphere for life to flourish in. The gentle, warm, yet powerful rays of the sun draws out vegetable life from the earth when spring comes and gives new expression to animal life also. They give color and beauty to all things growing with orderly harmony. Their various missions are among the many kind of plants in the universe to exert their powerful influence on each individual growth as well as each class of plants, draw out a striking, yet unified effect among them all in sprouting, developing, and ripening in fruitage. The silent and gentle appearance of the sun's rays are longed for and welcomed by all. Though gentle they are most powerful and can accomplish more than furious, blustering powers with greater demonstrations and noise.

Light is swift and far-reaching beyond comprehension of human genius. The full extent of their useful productiveness in all lines and branches of life is not fathomed as yet. By analyzing light and tracing its relation to and influence on matter and life, we can see the necessity of having it precede life. Its manifestations are much more beautiful and impressive when life flourishes in its gentle rays. Then the hidden treasures are brought out very strikingly in like manner as a photographer develops a negative from the darkness and shadow to show up complete in its fullness by the light. The gardener, by the aid of the sun's rays, changes the frozen, dead, and barren earth into a lovely garden spot, dotted with blossoms. Intervening objects obscure the light momentarily and, while casting

shadows, help to measure distances and to determine the course of the planets.

Light is the main agent to detect and search out the hidden grandeur and sublime problems of nature by using its direct bearing on life's intelligent mind. The giver of light saw that it was good and useful to man. Its entire effect is loaded with continual blessings unmixed in its gentle appearance. It comes without any emotional disturbances whatever on its gentle wings in the morning with bright beams for all, rich or poor, high or low, sick or well alike. It has healing in its bosom and distributes it generously without favor to any particular chosen few. It has encouragement and inspiration for all. It gives strength, nourishment, and vigor to all things and persons growing. Light carries support with it for direct sustenance of life.

No wonder then that light must appear before life. No wonder that He who called it forth and saw it in all its beauty and use said it was good. The soothing and benign beams, indeed, are welcome to all and appreciated with full satisfaction by everyone. The pleasures they call forth to us are so many and varied that we can not count them all. Light has no sane enemy, for who could be so rude?

With all the good and glowing attributes we can ascribe to light, we can not develop the full meaning thereof until we apply the interpretation in a spiritual sense, with a deeper significance and appreciation, with a higher ideal conception and brighter light for this and the next world. He who said, "Let there be light," also said, "I am the light of the world." He comes and lights up the many things that were in darkness before. They were partly revealed by holy men of old who, through visions, dreams, and more direct communications with the Creator, had revelations concerning light, life, and things in general as well as spiritual. But the cloudy interpretations of erring men crept

in and led the way to ruin, loss, and utter darkness. It was then that the true light appeared with its gentle, gleaming rays and lit up the way from darkness to the Father's home of eternal light.

Jesus, the spiritual light, came in lowliness and poverty from obscurity and humble parentage on the human side of life. Among these environments, in a gentle, winning way, he spread the light and in a measure bid the darkness to vanish. He gave life to the cold and dead religious forms of service into which the people had fallen at that time. He associated with those but little thought of such as the poor and the despised people more readily than with the rich and sightly. His life was given to serve the sick, weak, blind, and those in any way infirm. His aid was extended with the deepest sympathy for all needy. His assistance went out to the suffering ones. He worked in a quiet, gentle, and humble way, yet very effectively in establishing a lasting and far-reaching influence for good among men. Those who accepted His gracious offers and heeded His calls were greatly benefitted.

As the needy and infirm are looking for help, they found in Him a ready helper. He administered to all spiritual wants as readily as to physical. He puts forth great efforts to show that all are equally in need of repentance of sin and welcome to accept the spiritual life by grace through faith, and live a new life in the light of His glory. This light shows up human nature as none other had ever done before and revealed a more intelligent understanding of the Father and His attitude toward fallen humanity. The beaming smiles of love and assuring welcome by the Father were replete and unmistakable in the Son's calm face and bosom. He so fully represented the heavenly Father that He said, "He that seeth me hath seen my Father"; also, "I and my Father are one." He takes all

pains and exerts such heartfelt efforts to show us God's attitude toward sinners and make known the good tidings of mercy, love, and forgiveness that comes from the Father to us fallen and erring sinners.

What a light He is in the world today. How powerful its beams are in spreading the gospel truth. Nearly all nationalities are under their wholesome, enlightening influence. These rays show up the brightest side of the life, also the necessity and desirability of its holiness. This light shows up our future home in the new Jerusalem, so beautifully described that it makes us long for a residence there, for an endless day of pleasure in the Father's house.

Let us draw nigh to the light that we may see clearer and be warmed up by its rays; also, become more adapted for Christian growth, development, fruition, and final fitness to be gathered into the heavenly garner. The enlightening privileges of grace and love are reflected by all believers from Christ, the true brightness. The final adjustment of God's plan of salvation and restoration will be when we all shall appear in the presence of the Eternal Light and shine as stars who receive their brilliant glitter from the Son, Jesus Christ. Then we will worship in the temple that needs no sun, for there the Son of God will be the center of radiation.

The gospel is the atmosphere in which the true Light shines and shows up our real condition and also a possible escape therefrom by the plan revealed by this bright atmosphere. It is the aim of the Light to show up our lost state in a way to make it undesirable to us and then hold up the plan of salvation as something infinitely better to be chosen by us and accepted for even present peace and joy. This better part in life to be chosen by us is set forth in glowing Christian colors and becomes our desire when seen through the eye of faith in the gospel. These keen

rays show up the world's alluring and tempting snares, of which we do well to take due notice, and to resolve by the aid of their beams to turn our back to them with a firm determination not to yield to any tempting voice, but to resist evil in all its forms and deceiving shapes.

This radiation indeed brings out everything just as it really is. This intelligent vision serves as a reliable constant companion, guide, and judge that we can not get along successfully without after we once have formed a true acquaintance therewith. By this morning star, we can see to choose the path that leads to success in this life and the life to come, which is strewn with peace and happiness. We do well to abide in this light, for it makes our steps sure when we walk therein and our work easy when we work thereby. This light never goes out; so often when it is gloomy and discouraging without, we see and feel this light within the heart and so it helps to dispel the gloom by reason of its glimmering from within. We can do wonders by the rays of this light, as was done by men of olden times, whose deeds are recorded in science, history, and the Bible. Those men who have been closest to the light have seen and experienced the most. They are the most successful in accomplishing great things to their lasting credit, glory, and honor that survives all objectionable criticism. Among them we notice some most prominent and familiar to us, such as Enoch who walked with God and was taken away. His journey was in that halo.

Noah, by this dawn from above, saw clear visions and wrought faithfully therein for a long time, but he received his reward.

Abraham seemingly was in the dark whither he was going, for he was told to go to a land that God should show him. He journeyed in the midst of this light and there his vision was clear and far-reaching. Notice what he saw.

He entertained angels. He pleaded with God and got what he asked for. He saw a son many years before he was born. He saw himself a father of a mighty nation, in number as the sands by the sea or the stars in heaven. He saw this son offered and resurrected and afterwards the beginning of a new people chosen by God Himself. A peculiar nation different from all the rest, yet distinct by themselves. But Abraham by faith saw more than this. He saw also the reality of all of which his life experience was only a shadow and figure or a typical language with unspeakable deeper spiritual significance. He saw Christ's death, resurrection and the new church, peculiar and distinct, founded on the Eternal Rock by faith.

Joseph delighted to continually abide in this light unswervingly in all the severe tests he went through. He was sustained through it all by the powerful rays of knowledge that comes from the assurance that God was with him to light up the way, to reveal mysteries through visions. By this light he learned wisdom, good judgment, and became a favorite with God and all people. It might be said that Moses lived in the pillar of light, for he is a marvel to thinking and reasoning people. He received illumination from God who is the light as well as the Son.

Through Moses, God's rays shown marvelously, miraculously, and graciously to such an extent that his face declared it to all the people when he came down from the mountain where he was with God forty days. While on the mount he was shown by the true light patterns of various sorts pertaining to a place of worship, the tabernacle, and all the details pertaining to the building thereof, the vessels and their proper use, the way it was to be ornamented and their significance. He was also advised as to who should be the proper officers and the chief one among

them all. This was to be done according to the vision on the mountain seen in the true light.

Moses not only saw by the light. He did his faithful service thereby also. When his work was done and his journey ended, God took him up on a mountain again and by His light showed him the promised land. When God shows us the land it is without fear or favor and we usually become satisfied with it and rather sorry to be with God in the real promised land, where Moses went from the mountain height. David was called into this light to enjoy its beams of solacing peace. He seems to be in the right atmosphere when he can sing, compose, and play therein and have his whole life developed thereby. It was in this light he repented, and was forgiven, and had the joy of salvation restored unto him. It is humility to repent, blessed to be forgiven, and glorious to be restored.

David experienced all this and loved to tell of it to his fellow men so they might profit by his example and beware from falling as he did but rejoice with him in what he rejoiced. The wisdom of Solomon is a reflection of the heavenly light as it shines at noonday, as it were, in the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham of a great, mighty nation. It was fulfilled in display in Solomon's time to his credit next to God's.

All the noble characters and devoted lives by the prophets and other good men have been led in this light and been guided by its gentle effective rays.

Elijah was a reflection from God's light and demonstrated that all light comes from the living God who made heaven and earth and all things therein. He upholds and directs it all. No power is higher and therefore the only God who should be served without any doubt or slight devotion.

All these lights appear like stars in the heaven on a

clear, beautiful evening. They shine, each one, with the light he receives from God, the only self-existing light. How beautiful the glittering stars are for us to behold. We admire them and would not know what to do without them. They are so precious to us and they are doing what they were created for in the sphere they were placed.

Let us learn a lesson from the stars and shine with the light God gives us and in the place He ordains for us. This may not be among the best and most noted, for all can not be those. It may not be where we would like best to shine, for others may be better fitted for that place. But no one is better fitted to do my work than I am. Let this truth be more fully impressed on our minds and sink deeper into our hearts. Let this cause a longing desire to become more devoted to our duties. Let this spur us on with more faithfulness and greater pains to find out what is really our work to do and what we are most adapted to. Let us ask the question, "What wilt Thou have me to do in Thy light? How and where wilt Thou have me to shine?"

We see that the light shines partially through holy, devoted men who have lived at various times and were raised up for a special purpose to do certain work. All these great and energetic men have become in fame immortal for what they so faithfully did. Their lives are open pages for us to take up, read, study, and apply for our useful instruction, but we have full right to reject everything undesirable that their lives disclose.

All religious service and forms of worship, all institutions of memorials and manifestations of obedience, are expressions of faith, hope, and love, and are seen very clearly by this light. The nearer we are to this light the plainer those graces are discerned by us. We are also in the best position to reflect them to our immediate surroundings. It was stated that the heavenly light shows up this world in

its true aspect, and so it does, if we follow the light where it leads us to on the right mountain where God takes us to show us His glory. Not on the mountain where the tempter in his imagination leads us to by false pictures and misrepresentations. Let us notice the difference of the two and not mistake one for the other. Through this light we behold the true religion of lasting value to us all. We turn to history's record and read there and they will testify to the same as the Bible records in regard to persecution. This is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; while it was peace, harmony, and equality at first, it soon changed to opposition, dissension, and persecution. We read of how bravely the martyrs met all punishment the opposition saw fit to meet out to them. They saw by this light the promised land in all its fullness where nothing can enter that does and encourages what the persecutors carried out.

This light within the heart serves to determine and maintain Christian character; and where light and life are harmonious, heavenly visions can be seen in face of death and the grave. We are here reminded of Stephen when he saw heaven open and angels ready to welcome him. It was the Christian life that saw by the light what he did. Jesus, the light of the world, said when He left this earth that He would send the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit takes of Christ's teachings and exemplary life among men and reveals them to us. This is a light to us with application as well, for the Spirit shall reprove of sin. The Spirit works direct on our hearts and spirits, to persuade us of sin and repentance from unrighteousness and to flee to the place of refuge. There are some heights in the Christian experience to which the Spirit takes us, and we behold a transfiguration. By its light we see Moses, the law, Elijah, the prophet, and Jesus, the gospel. O, how pleasant to be there! What a gentle, soothing light.

Let us dwell there as long as we can. And when we must go down into the valley of humility and sorrow, let us not forget that we have been on the mountain. The beloved disciple was in the light of the Spirit on the island and there saw visions that are a surprise to all and surpassed by no one else. All those visions that he minutely describes were revealed to him by the light of the Spirit. He saw what was to take place on earth among men, kingdoms, and nations, both politically and religiously. Many signs he saw that would indicate to the watchman what time it was and how near to the great event of the final adjustment and restoration of all things.

It is admiringly astonishing to read the visions and partial explanations. But the height of it all is reached when he sees the new Jerusalem and describes its foundation, gates, and spacious mansions. He sees the river of crystal water and the tree of life on either side with twelve manner of fruit each month in the year. The saints are to feast on the delicious fruit, drink of the living water, sing the new song to the strung harps, while the crown of victory decks the head of those who have had their garments washed in the blood of the Lamb, and are there in His righteousness, spotless and pure.

The light was so bright that he could see all this and his eyes were properly adjusted to the rays, hence so clear, glorious and far-reaching vision.

He wrote down what he saw so we can also read it to our edification. We can ponder over these truths, accept and appreciate them through faith and hope, while here in contrast to the world's false inducements to follow the way of sin that leads to shame, ruin, and utter darkness. We call to mind the state of things before light was introduced into the world how gloomy, dismal and dark it was.

Light changed all this and now let us beware of going

to such a state and condition when there is help at hand. Light moves along on its swift wings and carries in its bosom love for all. Can we realize the true service of this as we think of light in all its meanings and applications loaded with all blessings connected therewith as free gifts from God who is the light and the Son who says, "I and my Father are one." Let there be light among us.

The harmonizing, close relations of light and life are noticed in flourishing results as the plants grow, blossom, and develop into ripe fruit, as man advances in beauty and loveliness. Let discord set in and the plants wither, fade, and decay, and man dies and becomes a nuisance, among the living, and must be assigned to the darkness under the sod.

They are the same rays from the same sun in the former as in the latter case, but the conditions of the objects are different. One has life, the other not; therefore, the opposite results. The same holds true in a spiritual sense. We must all pass before the searchlight sooner or later. The Creator shall review each one according to the light of the gospel. Those who have the new life within their hearts will stand the test and shall ripen into Christ's likeness, and be called into light and life eternal. But those whose hearts are dark in sin shall be darker still and will flee from God's presence into utter darkness. The Light of the world is the life-line that divides, and the rays come from the All-Seeing Eye. The important question is, Can I meet the rays of that Eye? Am I on the right side of the line?

Let the light of the gospel search our hearts now, so there will be a co-operative response therein at the final searchlight review. Let there be light.

CHAPTER III.

THE IMAGE OF GOD, MAN.

Genesis 1:27 — So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

The Creator said: "Let us make man in our own image." After all other things were created God formed man out of the earth. He had pronounced as good all things created before this. He had created many things to make it beautiful and pleasant for man, so he could enjoy himself. There were the sun to rule the day by light and to warm up the earth; and the moon to shine at night; also, the stars, so great in number, to glitter and to make the night more delightful. The air was full of birds on their wings, chirping and singing their beautiful tunes. The earth was green with grass, herbs, and shrubbery. The trees were verdant and full of blossoms and their various kinds of fruit. In the streams, lakes, and seas, the fishes were merrily swimming. There was activity on every side, and interest and beauty wherever one looked. In fact, it was in all respect as the Creator had pronounced it — good. To top the climax, a garden was planted for man, where he should

have his headquarters and which he should till and on the fruits of which he should live.

Man should also have dominion over all animals, birds, and fishes. He was to be a busy man and to fill a responsible position. He went to work and looked over it all, and gave names to the creatures. While he was at work in these interesting and delightful surroundings, he discovered that the animals were two of a kind. There was a companion for each one of a kind or class of creatures; but for himself he found no one to be an associate such as he desired. This caused him to feel lonesome among God's lively, undefiled universe. This lonely feeling gave expression to his appearance to the extent that God saw that he was lonesome. He felt a sympathetic pity for him and said: "It is not good for man to be alone." Adam could not keep up the interest in the things created, it seems, for he became disinterested and fell asleep. While he slept, God took a rib from his side and formed a woman. When Adam woke up, he was in the presence of the one with whom he was not alone, and very enthusiastically exclaimed: "A man shall leave father, mother, and home, and shall cleave unto his wife."

She was more to him than all the other creation, and rightly so. Equal life loves equal life, and is alone without it. The sensation of alone and not alone is love. This experience Adam never forgot. He had been alone and knew what it was. He was not alone and enjoyed its true pleasure and companionship. The whole creation from that time on looked different to him and was more beautiful than ever. We know the history of the race, to be sure. But notice that notwithstanding the fall, the punishment, and all consequences, such as that the earth should bring forth thorns, thistles, and weeds, that man should eat his

bread in the sweat of his brow — he has tried to prove himself a man for all that.

It has not been said of man from that day to this, from so high authority, that he looked lonely or that he was alone. On the other hand, he has showed high characteristics of manhood. He has gathered material from the forests and the banks of the rivers, from the quarries and the mines in the mountains, and selected a suitable location and built a palace for his home-queen. He has employed the highest class architect, and the most skilled workman to erect the structure in the most symmetrical proportions; indeed, a most handsome, convenient building. Into this dwelling, the finest carpets designed by any weaver cover the floor to walk on and lace curtains correspond from the lace-loom. The walls are made beautiful with the latest paper or fresco work. All is done with the intent of making it handsome and comfortable. The walls are ornamented with the loveliest pictures and paintings. The departments are set off by the finest portierres, or drapery. In the library are found the best production of all intelligent minds in the past and present, and of the greatest composition in music, from the most hilarious ecstasy to the most sympathetic symphonies, are found there and performed by someone on some musical instrument.

In all things, usually the best that can be afforded are gathered and centered in that dwelling. It is a place of rest, recreation, comfort, and ease, in health and in time of sickness. It is the home, and needs no other definition or explanation. Many homes form the community and unite to build schoolhouses, churches, and libraries, and attend them. They work for the worthy public enterprises of the place and to build up the community in general. Usually, each family takes of what it has and deposits it in bank of general prosperity in the commonwealth, and so helps in

some way to swell the surplus that a dividend can be declared and distributed among all the shareholders in the neighborhood.

From the many homes we invite our friends to come to our homes to dine and to spend the evening. Then the doors are open and the hearts are cheerful, and nothing is withheld that makes the moments pleasant to all and to glide by amid merriment.

These social functions are a standing advertisement of any community and a voice of welcome to strangers to come and enjoy what we already have, and help us to make it better. We all enjoy to live in good society. We all appreciate its pleasant influence and its gentle blessings. The social functions are recreations from close, monotonous business life and help to give a keener insight thereto, with a rested mind and body. It would be well if men devoted more time to good social gatherings and in that way, for a time at least, relieve the mind of the strenuousness of business. Men would, on the whole, live longer and be more truly sociable; also, enjoy themselves better generally and become more agreeable in business.

We have now noticed what men have done. They have had no time to be lonesome nor have they been alone. They have had their helpmeets to help continually. Woman's suggestions and directions have been of inestimable value in accomplishing what has been done. Woman's refinement, style, and good taste is seen through it all. Her own grace and loveliness adds the finish in the home. There is no home complete without a woman in it; when she is there, it is home; otherwise not, no matter how elegant the structure may be. Home is home to us without regard to the value in dollars and cents. It has the value at which two loving and united hearts estimate it, as a dwelling-place for their family. This is the true appraisalment and

it is usually high enough no matter what the rest of the world thinks about it.

Whoever heard so beautiful and enjoyable song composed and sung of a palace or of a millionaire's mansion as that of the little log cabin in the lane, so touching to the hearts of the common people; also, the song, "Home, Sweet Home"?

Man has not shirked in his duties nor tried to evade his punishment, but served his time out. He has all the time eaten his bread in the sweat of his brow and provided it for himself and family. Man has planted shade and fruit trees around the home, and the flower-beds on the lawn to offset the green grass. The sun's rays sparkle in the spray from the fountain. The fowls of the barnyard are provided for. Everything is trim, and is an honor to the owner, and speaks well of man. All do not have it so enjoyable — for they are not able — but a right-minded man plans in that direction and moves that way as far as his means will allow him to go.

There are influences brought to bear on man that throw him off the right track; when this happens he is anything else but a man; the cause is usually a foreign influence that overpowers him and possesses the very center of emotion; and he is not himself.

Man has also proved himself manly in God's direct service. When in the right relation with God, he has been the most humble, obedient, and faithful servant. He has done things that astonish us and awaken the highest admiration, not only of men but of God Himself. God has given the most exalted compliments to many noble heroes of old, through whom He handed down His precepts to man, concerning His will, plan, and direction. He uses man to help man. He reveals His will to men and they, by their example, show other men that it is possible for man to serve

God, and to live righteously in the midst of sin and darkness. God did not employ angels to do His most important work, but men. He wanted those who have had experience in repentance and had received the new life, for they were the most fit to work among their fellow men.

Man was created in God's image and the breath of life from God was associated with that form. Man was a distinctly different creature from all the rest. If this breath of God could embody the clay of Adam, it also could do so again more fully in Christ, the second Adam, in fullness and perfection. This body, with all its shapes and forms, seems to be Christ's choice to dwell in, and for a reason. He chose to be like us in all things, only without sin. Man's heart is a fit house for the Spirit to abide in. Christ not only appeared in a body like ours but He came and dwelt among us in the same sinful world. He worked like other men, and had need of food, drink, and rest, as we have. He went through all our experiences and was tempted in all things, but yielded not. He was made acquainted with humanity in all details. He knows what can be done in the body, soul, and spirit of man. God thinks His image can be made of the highest value. He sees great possibilities can be accomplished by man, through man, and among men, when the new life has taken possession of the heart.

It was this change of heart that God saw possible and set out to bring it about. The Father saw in fallen, sinful man the future bride of his only Son. The Son Himself saw His beloved bride, chose her while she was in the wilderness of sin, a slave in her servitude. They both saw a way, how she could be reached in her plight, set free from her bondage, and become pure, handsome, and altogether lovely. The plan was carried out to the letter. Victory crowned the whole plan of redemption, satisfactorily to the Father to whom Jesus returned when the work was finished

that He had come to accomplish at that time. The Spirit was sent down to earth to take up the work where the Son left it. The whole plan of God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Spirit, was agreed on before man, their image, was created and entrusted with the great responsibility of representing Jesus and advancing His teachings here below. Man was to go and preach the good news of salvation through Christ to all, just as He had done. His disciples were to begin who had been His immediate followers while He was here, during His whole earthly career. They saw what He did, heard what He said, and had His daily life for their example to follow. He promised them to send the Spirit who would give them courage, reveal the doctrine, give them better understanding and more steadfastness in His service. We must take further note of the fact that man was created in God's image. See how valuable he is in God's service when in direct loyalty to his humble, submissive living of the new life in Christ Jesus. Man can be aroused to do wonderful work and even be faithful therein unto death.

Let us look at man from God's standpoint; for by so doing we can perhaps see something admirable, too — what we imagine God sees with a perfect eye. We, of course, know full well that God sees everything sinful in man, and this is abhorrent to Him; but we will leave that for the present and think of man, the image of God, in His service. Let us call to mind what man has done by God's help and inspiration.

Noah was an image that represented God very well among his sinful generation. He was long-suffering while he preached and offered them salvation by the work of his own hands, the ark, but they would not accept of him for unbelief.

Abraham is another image of God. He is very con-

spicuous and has a striking resemblance of God. He is righteous, full of faith and obedience, pleading for the salvation of the wicked cities. He is a father of a multitude of people according to the promise.

Joseph is an image representing the Son of God so fully that the most doubtful can see a strong resemblance.

What shall we say of Moses, when his face shone to the people of Israel? Did it not remind them of the holiness of God himself?

David was a man after God's heart. That is certainly resemblance enough. How beautiful to read of his penitent heart as it is poured out before God after he had sinned. God loves to see man repent in humility. They then are in the right mood that makes them the true image of God. David was a different man after he had repented, had his sins forgiven by God, and the joy of salvation restored unto him. He could then sing, play, and compose the most beautiful poetry direct from the heart. We can compare David's utterances in the psalms and see how God-like they are and full of Christian experience. David's life and character was developed in the midst of much trouble and discouraging difficulties. In all this he delineates a God-like forgiveness to his strongest opponents.

Solomon in all his glory represented God as king. He was arrayed in grandeur, endowed with wisdom and power supreme. He reigned in peace in the midst of well-regulated religious services in the house of worship built by himself to the glory of God and men.

Elijah was so God-like that the rain from heaven depended on him for a season and revealed to the people beyond a doubt that Jehovah was the only true living God in Israel. He also went up into heaven like a god and was seen with Moses on the mount of transfiguration in God-like appearance.

We can continue and call to mind men whose career in life has a very strong resemblance of God because He dwells within their hearts, but this is enough to know that man was created in the image of God. Although man fell in sin, through Christ he now can become more God-like than ever before.

We want to dwell on what man has done in God's service since Jesus came, suffered, died, and rose again, then ascended up into heaven to be with the Father until he shall come again to receive us home. The disciples went out and preached the gospel as they were directed to do, and great success attended their efforts. Many were brought to feel their sinfulness and asked what they should do to get rid of their guilty feeling in their hearts. The disciples preached repentance to them and after that baptism and uniting themselves with the people who were jointly serving and working for God. There was a great work before them and the early Christians did not neglect their duties. See them how they are working; each one that had been converted had someone near and dear to him to whom he went and talked about his soul and the need of repentance, and to become a new man in Christ Jesus. Perhaps it was a wife talked with her husband, a husband with the wife, a mother with her children, a father with the family, a brother to a brother or a sister, a sister to a sister or brother. There was work done. They helped in some way to do what they could.

This wholesome exercise in God's service resulted in many thousands being added to the church of Christ. This work was like the service the Master was engaged in while here among men. Compare the two and see how alike they are. Who are the workers but men created in the image of God, reflecting God's perfect qualities in their deeds by the spirit within. When persecution arose, they kept on

just the same; if there was any difference, they became more earnest in their work, more devoted to their service, more loyal in their faith and more sacrificing even to giving up of their lives for Christ's sake.

We can not but be amazed and wonderfully astonished at the torture through which the martyrs went during the time of persecution, which lasted for many centuries. This multitude of martyrs testify to the firmness with which they held out in their belief and work for Christ and his doctrine regarding the plan of salvation.

There is a reason for all this which rests in the fact that Jesus sent the Spirit according to his promise when he ascended on high. This Spirit works the same faith, trust, love, and loyalty at all times, and when the Spirit is most needed it is most supplied to each person. Men in the church have worked faithfully, earnestly, and persistently, we might even say worked God-like, in rescuing the perishing all around them. The work has been crowned with success to the extent of millions on millions. Man was created in the image of God and this likeness is not totally lost sight of by him. God introduces a plan by which man obtains the nature of God and after that becomes His best servant. God is very much satisfied to have it so. He supports man by all the co-operation possible. God looks down among men on earth and sees the many beautiful homes built there, and the families that live in peace therein, who carry on industry, develop the community, build churches, schools, and attend them.

God sees it all flourish to the height of earthly possibilities. He sees His image and is delighted with the sight of him. The real home life is a blessed reality which even God is pleased to behold. In the home the boys and girls grow up and receive their proper training to take up life's duties where we leave them. They are to help make the

laws that protect the home and to help elect officers to see that the laws are properly enforced. The boys that love their home will become the best lawmakers in support of the home and will be the best soldiers to defend it from the invasion of an enemy. From the home comes the future devoted wife to help to make the home beautiful, pleasant, and comfortable. It is beautiful to think of the father, mother, and the children as one family in the home. It is there that God sees his image in man most perfectly and there let us look for it also. The best types of manhood are developed in the best homes and there we see the best reflection of all God's qualities centered. Peaceful dwellers in Christian homes are the true images of God and the standard bearers of loyalty and best citizenship among the most enlightened nations of the world.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.
—Rev. 1:8.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUPREME GOD: I AM.

Exodus 3: 14. And God said unto Moses, I Am that I Am, and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.

Here Moses has a direct introduction to the eternally existing God. He is the One, who was in the beginning and all things were created by Him. He states to Moses that He has been known before as God Almighty and was revealed as such to the patriarchs of old. But to Moses now He appears as Jehovah or I Am. When He spake the word the worlds and everything connected therewith came forth in obedience to the proper place, there to perform the duty according to the law set before each one of them in the time and space allotted with the greatest precision and accuracy. In order to carry out the plan of creation in full it was necessary that it should originate, be backed up, and be worked out by the eternal existence, I Am. It is a foregone conclusion that the greatest power should exist first of all power, and that all subsequent power can not equal, much less exceed, the prime power. It is also plain that the first existence should be complete, otherwise a more

perfect existence in some quality would attack the incomplete part of the first and so overpower it finally in duration.

All that followed in creation are more or less incomplete or dependent on the first being who is I Am. He is complete in existence, unlimited in power, profound in wisdom, unerring in judgment, and victorious in carrying out all his plans. The name, I Am, is characteristic of Him who bears it. There is no other word that so fully and completely expresses and defines itself as I Am, especially when applied to God, the eternal being. We have all good reason to believe that when God, in whom all fullness, wisdom, and reason dwells, should introduce Himself to Moses, He would do so by the most fitting name. Especially so when He was to induce Moses to go and carry out so great and marvelous work and needed the firmest assurance that he was supported and directed by an invincible power that had neither beginning nor end. There is no doubt that it was the most proper name at that time and ever since, for it served to persuade and encourage Moses to go. He accepted the assurance, received the commission, and acted according to both, although reluctantly at first. He proved to be a patient and faithful servant of God to the astonishment and admiration of us all, when we consider the adverse and discouraging circumstances connected therewith and all the time surrounded by a dissatisfied multitude of people in a desert without home and visible supply of food and raiment for over forty years. History records nothing like it, taking the time, number, and circumstances into account. But it was I Am who sent him to go and do a special work for Him.

Who is this I Am, and where is His dominion? We can in our imagination go back ages and ages before the creation of the worlds and we find I Am to be there, right at

home in the center of the eternal dominion, where He dwells supreme, without regard to time or limitation of space. He exists in completeness and changes not; for all elements necessary to unlimited, independent self-being are centered in Him.

In this dominion, everything is complete and gives evidence and expression of fullness as measured by God. Here He does not deal with erring humanity, their evil thoughts, their faulty expressions, nor use their inadequate language. Here God speaks to God in their own tongue in the holy of holies, the home of I Am, where no sin has ever entered nor ever will. We place ourselves in the midst of the universe and there we are face to face with I Am, although we may not always know Him nor fully acknowledge Him. He is where His work is; yes, He is in the midst thereof and upholds it all by His power. If our eyes were but open more fully so we could see clearer, we should unhesitatingly exclaim: "It is God's workmanship we are in, and His hand has wrought beautifully and well."

The more we study and learn to know nature, the more we see the resemblance of God and His law therein. The mist is gradually clearing away and there is a tendency for a clearer and brighter atmosphere in which to worship the Creator with more reverence, deeper devotion, higher intellect, and more fervent hearts.

The future is the continual presence of I Am when time shall be no more; so we can not get away from His presence. He is I Am in all places, realms, and dominions, in all ages and periods of time. The Father, Son, and Spirit are united as one in the triune God, I Am, and their government is centered in the eternal dominion.

Through the Father, all things originate and He is the planner; through the Son, all things are accomplished and

He is the Redeemer, also the Restorer; through the Spirit, all work is applied and He is the Caller, the Reprover, also the Comforter. The Spirit and Son are united by the Father in I Am, and the three exist as One Supreme Being, in their dominion.

The Spirit's special mission is in the spirit realm and unites it more particularly with the eternal dominion. The Son's prime office is in the human world as Redeemer, and unites it with the eternal dominion through the spirit-realm by the way that He opens through His blood, to the Father's home in His dominion.

After the Son had opened this way, he sends the Spirit here among us and His influence is now the same here as in the spirit-realm to apply and reprove. Those who are under His full influence have become spiritual by the work of the Spirit and have their communion with spiritual things. Earthly things should not be uppermost in our minds to hinder the close spiritual relation with God by the Spirit. This is a gradual process, continually growing upward in Christian grace to God's glory. We can not think that into the holy of holies anything sinful has ever entered nor ever shall come. It, no doubt, was in the spirit-realm, where the contest took place between Satan and Gabriel, not in the eternal dominion. It was in the human world, the agonizing conflict took place between the Son and the power of sin, death, and the grave, when He gained the victory over them all, and showed that He was the Resurrection and the Life. By His suffering, death, and resurrection He established the same relation between the human world and the eternal dominion as existed before between the spirit-realm and that dominion. After His death and resurrection, He declares to John on Patmos that, "I am the beginning and I am the ending," which means complete, uninterrupted existence. Before

that He stated through the same person in the gospel, "Before Abraham was I am, and I and my Father are One." He was by His Father's side when He founded the earth. I Am, the Creator, extends the creative point into a straight line. This line was extended into a level plain. This plain was extended into a cube. The result is the new Jerusalem, the city of the saints, whose length, breadth, and height are equal, the final home of the redeemed.

He calls forth and tosses worlds and planets into space, there to revolve and circle according to the law with which each is governed. A path for each is directed and a bound established beyond which it can not pass. I Am is just and merciful in all His functions and is guided in all things by infinite love.

A better understanding of nature and its laws enables us to form a higher conception of the Creator and His divine dealings with us. The universe, with all its equitable laws as it came from the hand of God, is a marvel that attracts our noblest respect and most reverential admiration. Its symmetrical sublimity and lofty grandeur can not be fathomed in its entirety. But ideal as it is and majestic as it appears, there is a supremely higher and deeper revelation than the universe itself and that is when the Creator appears as the Redeemer in the human world. There I Am is truly devoted, amazingly wonderful, and humble simplicity.

He left the heavenly glory with the Father and came down to this dark and sinful world and lived among the lost, erring, and fallen humanity. He began life as a child in the manger at Bethlehem. There the Son of God appears as the Son of Man, in the person of a child. There all the qualities of a God and that of man are combined in one. This is, indeed, great and wonderful, nevertheless true. In His earthly career, He discloses that He and the

Father are One and that He has power like a God over all the elements in nature and the passions of the human heart. He came at a time when the world was full of sin, depravity, and utter darkness and said, "I am the light of the world." This light shines so as to show up the folly and wickedness of a life of sin, error, and shame, also, a way of escape therefrom to a place of refuge and safety.

This is most beautifully illustrated by the prodigal son, when he was farthest away in the land of God-forgetfulness; he saw the father's house and resolved to return by the way that the light revealed. This light was brought to the prodigal by Him who said, "I am the light of the world." This light made it possible for him to live, see, and return. Light was called forth in the beginning before life was introduced into existence to make it possible for life to live. It is even so in the spiritual sense; the light came to the prodigal so that he should be able to live and to see. Life is very closely associated with light. The light says I am the life. He sends light, the proper atmosphere, for life to exist in. The two come from the same eternal source and are infused into our hearts so that we become alive to all that is righteous, pure, and holy, and can see light in the light.

It was this life that resolved in the prodigal to return home, that was kindled by the rays from the Light of the World. His awakened intelligent heart led him to the resolution of returning home, since by this light he saw a way of escape by which he would arrive at home. The Life says: "I am the way," from the deepest and darkest misery in sin to the Father's welcome bosom. The Way says: "I am the door," and it stands open to all. No one will be denied admittance; so while the voice is calling, come and enter now. The door says in a gentle, welcome voice: "I am the good shepherd." He does not only stand by the

door but goes into the desert of sin to seek for the lost one. He comes direct to us in our most helpless condition, and offers us these gifts free, and makes it possible for us to accept them. Then we begin to see and realize that we are spiritually alive and can, in a measure, experience the reality and truthfulness of these facts regarding what our Savior is for us. This inner experience gives us more reason to trust Him and rely on what He says; for the Spirit testifies with our spirit that those things are true. The good, tender Shepherd says: "I am the truth," and this truth sets us free. We need not hopelessly listen to the false statements of the tempter, who is a liar from the beginning. We have the delightful privilege to hear the truth, accept the invitations, and rely on all the promises. He seeks the lost ones, brings them light, gives them life, opens their eyes, ears, and hearts, endows them with understanding in the heavenly things, and leads them unto Himself for nourishment, protection, guidance, and safety.

The truth says: "I am the bread of life;" and we are cordially invited to partake of the wholesome daily diet, for this bread sustains the Christian life and makes Christians grow strong so as to be able to do active, persistent work for the Master in His vineyard. The living bread says: "I am the living water; come unto me and drink, all ye who are thirsty from the long journey in the drear desert." There we can drink to our satisfaction from the pure, refreshing stream. This stream of living water, in its winding way leads us to a good, quiet Christian rest under the shadow of his wing. This needed service is rendered unto us as sure as the day comes with increasing interest, confidence, and enjoyment to both Shepherd and his flock. This close relation is properly alluded to and explained by Jesus when He says: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." The same life sap that exists in the stem runs into the

branches and they must stay close to the stem in order to have a healthy growth, so as to blossom and bear much fruit.

We live in a world full of sin and evil. Christ went through it all and knows what it is to be tempted like we are. He is acquainted with our difficulties, disappointments, and proneness to wander away. He therefore has, by example and illustration, set these beautiful, striking relations of Himself and His followers before us for encouragement, hope, and proof of His personal care for His people. It is well for us to dwell under His influence continually. We are then the safest from harm and nearest to His needed help. Those who are partakers of these graces and live thereby are well allotted and have chosen the better part for this life and that to come. While this is really hopeful and there is no good reason for doubt and discouragement, yet there may be moments when even the Christian will feel downhearted and harbor thoughts that will make him shudder. The result of sin rages all about us such as sickness, poverty, separation, death, and the grave. These may, like clouds, cast a dark shadow over us momentarily. Truly we must abide in the shadow while the clouds roll by; but there is even hope then. It is not cloudy continually and the sun of hope will lighten us until we again see the brightness without clouds.

There is a calmness in death and an illumination in the grave, for "I am the resurrection and the life" are the comforting words of the Savior to the bereaved and disheartened. It was bright to see angels in the grave but more glorious by far to be able to see resurrection Himself there. We who believe in Him have the strongest assurance thereof, which is a source of peace and calm in the shadow. The resurrection is the seal of success of the whole plan of redemption, and we can behold by faith its beautiful real-

ity in the midst of momentary gloom and despondency. Our Savior is the Christian's life here. He is the deliverer from the prison of death, the resurrection, and He is the life beyond the grave. We are then delivered safely in the Father's house by the Redeemer according to their mutual eternal plan of salvation and restoration. We have assurance of the eternal city, for Christ gave His life that we might inherit a home therein with Him. Christ says: "Before Abraham was I am," showing thereby that the plan of redemption rests on the same eternal Rock as that of creation, and its origin is the same and it has the same ending in God, the eternal I Am.

Blessed are they who live the new life. Blessed eyes that see these visions. Blessed hearts that can accept these gifts. Blessed ears that can hear these truths. Blessed faith that can trust in these promises. Blessed assurance that can hope to realize the fulfilment of God's covenant. For such persons, salvation is assured and Christ is spoken of as "my Beloved" by the chosen bride, the church of Christ. All power and existence are inherent in I Am. Nothing can be conceived of that will overpower or depose Him from His eternal throne. All creatures are subject to Him with more or less limited power delegated to them. All things antagonistic to I Am can not exist in His immediate presence any length of time unless a proper change has taken place. This change is wrought within our hearts when God gives us everlasting life. This God offers free to all but we must of our own enlightened will and converted choice accept His gracious gift to us. We then become citizens in the eternal dominion and subjects in that government which He has established for our perpetual protection, security, and enjoyment. This is a personal experience between God and the individual. We can argue in theory and reason, but not in experience. Therefore ex-

perience is on a much higher plane than argument, and should not be measured by that standard. Faith is established and made sure by experience, often contrary to argument and logical conclusions. Experience does not overthrow argument, go against reason, nor ignore logic, only in preconceived instances; otherwise experience changes about and opens up a new and better way of harmonizing them with our own experience which to us then become the strongest and best argument, logic, and conclusion. No matter how we reason and argue, we shall finally come to the conclusion that we can not be fully satisfied in this world. It is not the proper soil for satisfaction to grow in, much less develop, blossom, and ripen into fruit complete. We must be transplanted into eternity for that, where all fullness exists and the fruit of satisfaction will fill our hearts to overflowing in the presence of God, the Father, there to inherit jointly with our elder Brother. We shall be satisfied then. The command was for Moses to go down to the children of Israel and say unto them that I Am has sent him to deliver them from their bondage. Moses was to go to them as a deliverer and, with a mighty hand, remove the fetters of their bondage. The way they were to be delivered was by showing that their God was mightier than the gods of Egypt. Moses was the direct agent of the only living God. He served him by doing many wondrous miracles before Pharaoh. The plagues caused him to yield to let Israel go time and again, but when the punishment was over he refused to let them go. When at last, according to the word of Moses, the first born in every family in Egypt was dead, Pharaoh allowed them to go and worship their mighty God. We see that I Am was a powerful God and proved that to the defeat and sorrow of the Egyptians and the success and joy of Israel.

He plainly showed them that He deserved to be worshipped as He demanded of them.

God never asks us to take a step that is not justifiable and to our interest. He usually shows good reason why we should obey His commands, but at times this is rather obscure when He has holy, righteous, and trained Christian men to deal with like Abraham and many more like him. But with a nation like Israel He usually showed them some miracle to call their attention to that they were led and directed by a mighty God who has not met any being more powerful than Himself. He therefore says, "I Am." This explains it all. There can be no other being more powerful. He then is complete in existence. He is the height of wisdom, the perfection of justice, and the tenderness of love. All good qualities are centered complete in Him. He is occupying all space in the earth, in the spirit-realm, and the eternal dominion; otherwise, other being could say here is a place where I am. He, however, is not equally confined to all places for there is the outer court, the inner court, and the holy of holies. It is astonishing how much this name, I Am, implies. It is the proper name for our God. No wonder He was known to Moses by that name. He has the same name today and proved to us more abundantly what He is and revealed His power beyond reasonable doubts that He deserves the name. With all these strong evidences, there is a tendency to unbelief, but this is brought about more on account of neglect and not being interested in our welfare rather than from real investigation in these facts and forming a conclusion therefrom. It is therefore that the word comes to God's servants today as well as to Moses for them to go down to the captives in the bondage of sin and error and deliver the people from their bondage, for I Am sends the laborers in the field. Go down to them with the message of the free gospel and

salvation for them. Tell them of Christ's miracles among men, of His aid to the needy, of His comforting words, of His sympathetic efforts, of His power to forgive sin; tell them that He can heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, and restore the dead to life; tell of the good news of peace on earth and good will among men and that the year of jubilee has come; tell them they are all invited to come.

No one needs to be left out. We all can engage in His service and help the good work along. We can do something and we shall have our reward and satisfaction of knowing that we have in some way worked for the Master who has done so much for us. If we are on the Lord's side we have nothing to fear for there is no higher power. Let us worship Him with all due reverence for He is the absolute, complete, infinite being I Am now as of old. Let us read the firm testimony of the Lamb himself that was slain but is alive forevermore, at the Father's throne. I Am, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last. He that liveth and was dead and is alive again forever and hath the keys to death, the grave, and can open the book and reveal all mysteries in due season. He is the root of David, that eternal existence for its sap. To this root, we are engrafted, grow, and ripen into like manner of fruit. He is worthy of our appellation: Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God Almighty, which was and is, and is to come. Since He is coming, let us be awake on the watch-tower with our lamps burning, looking for His return. We will then be in the right spirit and ready to meet Him. These things are said by Amen, the beginning of creation, the restorer, and the ending thereof. We can say nothing authentic against them of a lasting duration, but submissively bow our knees in all due reverence to the mighty I Am, the glorious Amen.

The lofty, majestic mountain needs no other material

for its solid foundation than itself. It towers above the clouds, covered with pure white snow, and demands no other more resourceful reservoir for new supply. The sun's gentle rays combine their work and the snow melts, flows down the mountain side in rills, brooks, and rivers, filling lakes, watering vegetation, slaking the thirst of life, maintaining the life of plants and their fruits, entering into veins of animals, including the very heart of man, renews vigor, and gives needed purification and refreshment. Thus its mission on its way to the ocean, carrying with it all possible impurity; then the ever active rays of the sun take it up in the air, form clouds, and carry it back to the mountain top, as pure and useful as at first, with not a particle lost or wasted. This circuit is repeated again and again with no perceptible variation nor delay.

We realize this process in our bodies as we daily partake of God's blessings in the way of nourishing refreshments. This is an emblem of the ever existing mountain, I Am, with its base in the eternal dominion, whose mighty power, resourceful, everlasting, beneficial blessings of infinite love and mercy flow in abundant streams down into creation to bestow them upon the whole universe, especially mankind. He is the I Am in the beginning and completion of creation, supreme in His masterly work that recommends the nature of His stately workmanship, thus ending the circuit of creation.

He is the I Am in the beginning and completion of redemption, submissively obedient in humility unto death and resurrection from the grave; thus completing the circuit of redemption, He ascended to the Father. He is the I Am in the beginning and completion of restoration, faithfully promising to come again and receive the bride to the Father's house, thus fulfilling the circuit of restoration. From this mountain top flows the river of life and on its side

grows the tree of life. This mountain furnishes materials to build the best characters and a fit temple for the most high God. On this mountain grow the olive trees that supply the lamps with oil to light the world. From the quarry in this mountain side, the tables of stone were taken on which the law was written. On the mountain, the prophets sacrificed and the Father offered up His only Son. On its side, the Shepherd feeds His flock and from its top, He ascends to the Father. From the mountain, I Am, our Betrothed shall come again to take His bride to the Father's house. The top of this mountain is abundantly covered with righteousness, purer than snow. Its inner gentle radiation turns it into universal blessings that feed the spring of life as it runs down into the human world and most profusely reaches mankind.

There is an invisible connection with the sun and the diamond, hidden in darkness and covered with dust, that becomes more visible when brought to the surface, where the colors glitter and the value appears. We are reminded of the same relation in the water of the dark clouds in the sky, where the same colors are blending to make out the admirable rainbow. The flowers of the field are only a step nearer to us, revealing the same line of thought, with vegetable life speaking to us in its beautiful language. Behold, at our feet the caterpillar lies, which, by and by, will appear unto us a lovely butterfly and move onward and upward as beautiful as the flower with animal life connected.

The eloquence of it all is man himself, forming another and nearer link in the chain of creation and revelation, more wonderful and beautiful than all the rest. It is the image that can speak to God and God to him. It is this lovely creature that is chosen to be the bride of the Son of God and the marriage will take place in the Father's house at the time appointed. The Bridegroom is now in

the Father's presence, while the bride is continually waiting for his return. When He comes again, the invisible to us now will appear visible unto us in all its connections. Then it can be truly said by every faithful believer that I am with I Am, which is home eternal.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.—Rev. 2:7.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.—Rev. 22:14.

CHAPTER V.

THE TWO CHARACTERISTIC TREES.

Genesis 2:9 — And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst in the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

During the creative period of six days, God gave expression to His choice and will; as the result, we see manifested the whole universe of variety, beauty, and usefulness. Choice and will are qualities inherent in God. It was God's plan that a creature in His image should have dominion over all living creatures on the earth and should care for and keep the Garden of Eden. In order properly to fulfill the important duties of this high office, man must be endowed with conscience, will, and choice, the functions of which are necessary in the person to execute in so important a calling.

It becomes plain to us why man was thus created with conscience, will, and choice: the position he was to occupy demanded it and man was made to fill the demand. God's breath to man delegated these qualities to him; for man was God's image in qualities and in functions as well.

God's glowing words and elements are indelibly imprinted in man's life. Conscience, will, and choice aid man to exercise judgment in the light of wise reasoning. The highest attainments in these excellent qualities are reached by the actuating promptings of love from an unselfish heart.

Thus we have the fullest and noblest manifestation of life in man; for to the highest officer was given the most efficient expression of power and executive ability. God saw how necessary and useful these qualities would be in man's life on earth. The need of these in man is just as apparent after the fall; for disobedience did not deprive man of them. The innocent, exalted, and expressive life as exhibited in man had knowledge of the two trees in the garden: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and of God's respective permission and warning connected with each. God is love and the fullest manifestation of His affection for His subjects is to endow them with and to recognize in them will and choice, and enlighten their conscience by the inclinations from love of Divine origin.

Man was to eat of the fruit from the tree of life, but was forbidden to eat of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; for if he did, it would result in suffering, destruction, and death. Man was to be tried by the test of continual obedience. In connection with all this, there is an opposing deceitful power that made its presence before man in his innocent state. This power of evil was once in the truth and its estate, but did not, for some reason, abide there; he rebelled, became a liar and a murderer, "the father of lies." He is the serpent who used his skill in inducing our first parents to disobedience, which resulted in the fall of man and all its consequences. They were separated from the tree of life by the angel

with the two-edged sword that guarded the entrance, and man, with the appetite for the forbidden fruit, was to have the experience of his life in the results of the fall. The fruit was good if left alone, but became evil by disobedience. By partaking of the fruit, man's life and nature became like the fruit he ate, deadly unto death.

By studying the man that ate the fruit and the symptoms it gave him, we will learn more fully of the results of the tree and its fruit. Man represents the knowledge of or the experience with good and evil. We have remnants from the Garden of Eden handed down to us that we may at will examine and allow to convey to us undisputed, convincing evidence in regard to good and evil, and which we choose by will, in our every day life. God instituted in the Garden of Eden the covenant of marriage and its beautiful, useful, and enjoyable field of action, the home. Surely they are among us to-day with audible voice and plain language.

Man, as one person, was created good, but in the midst of the beautiful creation, it developed there was a lack, a void, a want to be supplied. A lonely feeling crept into his heart and gave expression to it in his appearance before God. Man saw all living creatures in pairs, and man alone. This is a very useful and essential sensation of the heart, the one component element of love itself. Man awoke from this state of loneliness and its sensation in the presence of the object of his choice and his will was to leave all else for her companionship. This sensation of the heart is the other constituting element so essential that makes up love. This is a fair example of what can be aroused in man's heart and with what functions he was created, only waiting opportunity for development. This is one of the most interesting facts, and is of common occurrence among us to this day from before the fall. The

man and wife in the garden were united in marriage as one person and are so united now. The father, mother, and children were to be as one family then and are so now, with the home as their common abode.

The first family life resulted in two sons after the fall, one doing good before God; the other doing evil according to God's word. Here is another manifestation of the tree with the fruit of good and evil. God spoke to Cain before he did the bloody deed and made it plain to him: "If thou doest well, shall thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Thus with full knowledge and warning, Cain's wilful choice resulted in taking his brother's life, who gained communion with God, while Cain obtained experience with a guilty conscience in sin. Man obtains the most complete and impressive knowledge by personal experience, whether good or evil. Thus experience gives man the best instruction and his life is the best school.

God created all things good and for a special purpose, but all things were not good for man to eat. There are many things for man to leave alone now as well as before the fall. As long as Adam and Eve let the forbidden fruit alone, no harm was done to anyone. It was disobedience in their hearts that changed their knowledge and experience from good to evil and has done so ever since. Disobedience to all well founded laws brings evil and sad experience. Disregard for any law has its evil results; be it the laws toward God, health, marriage, home, or government, God did not create the evil; that is created by those that rebel, disregard, and disobey. Evil arises from the innermost heart and forms a dark cloud of sin that intervenes between God and man. The seed of evil came to the heart of Eve by the deceiving serpent's voice and lodged there to action. Evil existed before

man was created and that is why God told them of the tree of good and evil; also of the result of eating its fruit.

Evil is to life as darkness, sickness, poison, and death, whose experience produces in man the most complete knowledge thereof. The benediction of God's blessing rests on the father, the mother, and the children as a family growing in the knowledge of good and the experience of its many blessings; but evil will creep into this life from another source. The home so sacred is invaded by the serpent who comes to despoil what is so peaceful and fair. There is nothing more certain than the existence of good and evil and our experience therewith. Man is possessed or dominated over by one force or the other. There is no neutral state. Man must, by choice and will, co-operate with one or the other, according to election by intelligent enlightenment. The all-important question to us is to which voice shall we listen and submissively heed? God warned Cain, as He did his parents, of the possible evil and its results.

Pharaoh was foretold of every single plague that should befall him and his people, and had the choice to let Israel go, and be relieved from the plague, or to retain the children of Israel in bondage and be afflicted with the judgment of God. He exercised his choice every time as he would have it be.

Judas was told by the Master Himself that he should betray Him and in this full light and knowledge of evil, Judas did his dastardly, cowardly deed. The reason of his betrayal is given by Jesus: "Because the Devil having already put into the heart of Judas to betray him." According to this, the old serpent has the same poison of sin in his tongue and is ever alert for his prey. His sting is aimed at the center of life, man's heart. His intention is to do harm unto death, under the disguise of good.

God is entirely set against evil and does not sanction it; but His long-suffering allows it to exist side by side with good for a season. The wheat and the tares shall grow together until harvest, but shall eventually be divided. From a kernel of wheat that falls into the ground and dies, a new life springs up, forms straw and chaff, also a new kernel with the same life within; but the chaff and kernel shall not always be together. They will finally be separated by the voice of God. There is, then, in man that which perishes and that which lives eternally. This eternal life is God's gift to man through Jesus Christ, His only begotten and beloved Son. Jesus is the Tree of Eternal Life with its magnetic development that draws our lives by cords of love into Himself, so our lives become hidden in Him and God can see but one pure living tree with its fruit.

The blood of Jesus cleanses us of all sins. The life is in His blood and the blood of Jesus flows to our hearts by faith in Him. His blood removes the sin from our hearts and gives us life and a clear conscience, so we have peace with God, with man, and with ourselves. This peace is worthy to be sought after, to be compared with the wages of sin. The highest diploma that is obtained in the school of sin is entire dissatisfaction at last, and utter disappointment. This is an unenviable crown to obtain, at the end of life, for faithful and hard service in sin and worldly pleasure.

Each human life is an experiment with good and evil; yet one is the ruling power from the heart. King David is an example of a life of good and evil, but he did not continue in the evil, when he saw it in the right light. He repented deeply from the evil and sought, more persistently than ever, to do the good. Abraham was tested with a severer test than our first parents were and stood the test

until God said: "It is enough." Joseph also retained his good character through life. There are so many witnesses for the good and true side of life that testify by life and in death of the wisdom to choose the good and shun the evil. "The potter wrought a vessel and it was marred in the hands of the potter and out of the marred lump, he made a new vessel such that seemed good unto him." Man was marred in the hands of God before he had completed his time in the furnace of test, so God, out of the marred man, made a new creature in Christ Jesus and this is the vessel of mercy and of love, which is an honor unto Him and contains all the heavenly graces for use and keeping among mankind, and is tested in the most heated furnace of persecution and martyrdom.

Those who yield to temptations and give themselves over to the old serpent become vessels of dishonor, not because they have not had the opportunity, but because they prefer marred lives. God foresaw who should accept the offer of salvation and embrace its living truths unto final restoration of all things. He also knew who would rebel, reject, and shun His offer of free salvation in Christ Jesus. In His wisdom, long-suffering, and love, God permits the most wicked men to live on with the privilege of choosing anew a life in sin, or repenting unto a new life according to the faith in Christ Jesus, who is the eternal life unto us. God could strike the evil-doers in death before they did their evil deeds, and thus prevent the evil, but it is not His plan so to do. There are men whom nothing but death can keep from doing evil, and, to them, death will finally come as the only preventative, when all other means are exhausted; because God is merciful, patient, and loving. The angel with the two-edged sword still guards the entrance to the tree of life and separates man therefrom, "That he should not eat thereof and live forever."

There is a new door that opens to the way that leads to eternal life, and that is through the body and in the blood of Christ Jesus, lifted up on the cross on Calvary. There is the exhibition where the way, the truth, and the life has His experience with the deceiver, the murderer, and the father of lies. This tragedy draws the attention of all men and will give a marked impression that can not be erased from man's mind and heart. Man must deal with it personally in one way or another; either accept it as true to himself or else as false unto himself personally. The power of evil is a tremendous power with a retaining force that is hard to describe; so it is not a light thing to tear away from sin and unbelief. It requires a stronger power which is in Christ to do this, and it requires a struggle in man's heart and often a severe one.

That the power of evil is mighty we learn from the words of Jesus, as follows: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour." Christ came for that purpose and He accomplished what He came for and set the resurrection as a seal to it all, and placed the crown of victory on the life and head of the risen Lord. The story of the cross has been kept alive by preaching of the gospel and by collected selections of inspired writings, which are made alive in man's heart by the Spirit that came in answer to the prayer that Christ prayed to the Father when He ascended on high.

The Spirit longs to give us, and is anxious that we shall accept, the experience of this new life. The inner testimony of a true heart is that the life as it is found in Christ Jesus is the only satisfaction to be gained in this world. This experience goes direct to the center of the existence of life, or, rather, is the existence of the new life, and we then feel its thrill in our hearts which moves us to Chris-

tian activity, and will be a continual living experience and expression of good to the world. Experience most effectively moves man to lasting, realistic, rational conclusions. This experience is principally between God and man himself, but it gives expression of the new life in us to the world and we know that there is a God because the true Christian life revealed in us is so much like the life of Christ among mankind.

True Christian lives are of great value in this world. Without them, this world would be almost intolerable. The Christians are continually working to establish the good and allay the evil. Their persistent efforts are expressed in constant preaching; in fervent prayers, public and secret; in urgent solicitations and face to face talk; in distribution of the Bible and sacred books. All these efforts are persistently kept up as holy incense ascending up to God and calling for Him to descend with His blessing to give life to the seed sown and an abundant, fruitful harvest.

Thus we have good and evil before us. Let us ask God to help us to choose the good; for we can not do this of ourselves. He knows what is in the way and how we can be rescued. Let us yield ourselves entirely to His influence, let them become hidden as one with His and we can appear before the Father as righteous in Christ Jesus. We then will be engrafted into the tree of life and restored finally to the Father.

The true value of a Christian life and its influence on others is nowhere more beautifully revealed than in the case of the widow, Naomi; the influence of her life on others is no more impressively portrayed than in the case of Ruth. Both had experience with famine, sickness, and death; so one could, in true sympathy, comfort the other. Ruth was with her people, while Naomi was among strangers. Seemingly, Ruth might have remained with her people with more

propriety and shared her sympathy with her sister-in-law, Orpha, but she did not. Naomi's beautiful life had awakened in Ruth a beautiful choice and persistent will, which is best expressed in her own words: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die and there will I be buried."

Let us turn our eyes to the life of Christ Jesus from His earthly beginning to His human end. Let us listen to His words among man and on the cross. Let us feel after the inspiration of His life with our hearts and we shall experience an influence that will move us to a grander choice than Ruth and to a more determined will and we, like Ruth, shall appear in direct line of the heavenly genealogy, with blood relation to our elder Brother, with whom we are joint heirs to the heavenly estate. Disobedience to our own awakened and enlightened consciences is the most irritating state in which a person can be. It causes an annoying disposition in the individual which usually inflicts itself on all those with whom he comes in contact. It is customary in such cases not to trace the fault to the right place with the intention of removing the cause; but rather, to attribute it to some one else.

This has been the habit since Adam and Eve first introduced it, nor has this fashion changed any during this long interval of time. This way of trying to avoid the accountability has, however, not been successful in the presence of the All-seeing Eye, before whom we shall all appear. We can not move away from a reproving conscience; for it will follow us wherever we go; nor will it let us have peace as long as we continue to disobey its gentle voice, especially when we know better and speak and act contrary thereto. In cases like these, it is best to look first to our own hearts

to examine them; to listen to the conscience. Let us not blame anyone until we know we are right; then we can deal better and more effectively with others.

We have the kind invitation to take all our troubles to Jesus, who understands them all and is willing and can help us. He is our place of refuge amid all disturbances and is the remedy that removes the evil from our hearts which was brought there by eating of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life is always good; it is God himself. The tree of good and evil is man, who is good and evil. The evil branches can be engrafted into the Tree of Life and entirely partake of His nature, then the good will predominate and develop into fruit of its own kind. Man will have experience with good and evil, which should lead him to choose the everlasting good by God's graceful, loving help. The two trees in the garden represent God and mankind and their experience.

The ripe experience of Job speaks thus: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my veins be consumed within me." This is a gem from the lowest depth of difficulty and distress in human experience and is of the highest value and glitters as such in all its variety of genuine colors. It is the hopeful sign above in the dark, threatening clouds visible in the same glorious manly hue, which reminds us of the flowers in the oasis and the lilies in the marshes. It is the evolution of the caterpillar of unbelief into the beautiful high-soaring butterfly of truth and life, a living reality, though without visible connection. It is the outburst of eloquence of the image of God speaking to his friends. It is the confessed experience of man in the presence of God. It is the

most eloquent expression of man among man. It is the experience of the two trees engrafted in the tree of life and the fruit that grows on its branches and is delicious as it becomes our own.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PERSONIFIED WORD OF GOD.

John 1:1 — In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

The resourceful, searching mind of man, in all conscientious, consistent investigation and reasoning, will arrive at the correct conclusion that there is an invisible first cause that has produced all creatures and things that are about us. By observing and studying the creation as a whole and its laws, we learn the certain necessity of the Supreme Cause. Our very limited ability and dependent functions argue to us this fact and that the universe is its direct effect. Here man is compelled to stop in conjecture and imagination, unless this cause, in some way, reveals to us who He is. This has been done so completely that man need not be in doubt thereof, nor wander indifferently about in the paths of error and uncertainty; but march on in the firm highway of truth and light verified by man's experience.

Man, as a creature of God, is a strong evidence to himself that there is one Supreme God, the Father of us all; for man was developed in the image of God by the power of the Word imparting His life into **man** and by that pro-

cess, can become the crown of creation. Each class of matter, each kind of creature, and the power of maintaining and developing the same is a distinct link in the chain of creation; but each is also an evidence that a power outside of this chain must have existed to produce the links, to form and weld them and give the touch that starts all in motion to perform harmonious action and service to the inherent, inspiring force from the command of the Word.

Each creature is like a link, distinct in itself, yet one part of the united whole creation. Each has laws, functions, and cravings of its own, peculiar to its kind or class than can not be denied, doubted, nor done away with by mere contradiction. Man's increasing knowledge of these laws and functions makes man the strongest evidence to himself of the one God, and the revelation of himself through the Word his most complete expression. The creatures have appetites and natural cravings that must be satisfied and consequently, they are provided for by the Creator in all wisdom. In man, therefore, we can look for the expression of the highest and noblest development of these inner inherent functions, found complete in the Creator.

Man has, in common with the lower animals, cravings for food, rest, and protection and has these wants supplied daily as he needs them. Man also has in the heart a function that longs for a communion with God and will not be satisfied with anything less. This longing is also abundantly provided for, and in a wonderful way that appears mysterious because of sin. The fall of man in sin did not deprive him of any of the cravings, not even the religious; but it sadly perverted them into paths of error, sin, and shame.

Man drifted into the most bewildering state and would have given up in despair but for the Word in the beginning, who came and spoke the truth and made the promise. At that time, man, in his fallen state, did not try to deny

God's existence, but tried to flee away and hide from His face, because he was not fit for God's presence. It is here the Word comes to man's rescue. The Word knew how man was constituted, and what means could be used to arouse his attention, to make him consider and finally repent of his otherwise downward course to destruction. On the day of the fall, the Word became the Mediator between God; the Father, and man, the transgressor. This is astonishingly appropriate and interesting beyond description to fallen mankind. The Word well knew what link in the chain had been broken; what check had been caused thereby in God's peace toward man; what dark, ugly cloud of sin had risen; what terror was in man's heart, and what impassable gulf intervened. The Word knew what the Father demanded and what must be removed in order that man could have peace with God. There was a possibility that man knew not of and for which it never could have entered into his heart to ask. So in love, mercy, and compassion, the offer came from God through the Word.

In order that this Word should become the most effective in expressing, representing, and revealing God, He should become flesh like one of us and dwell a season in our midst. This promise and covenant on the day of the fall was to be kept alive before the people for generations until the time of fulfillment. Thus those who lived before Christ's coming, believed in a Savior to come, and those who lived after, believed that He has come, according to the promise, and fulfilled all, according to the covenant. This Mediator has appeared at many times and, in various ways, used characters of holy men along life's highway to help explain and interpret God, the Father, to man. Governments, laws, and religious services were instituted, typical of what should take place when the Savior came. These ordinances were to be continually observed and their language was to voice

and keep the important truths ever before the people, and to explain their deep significance as centered in Christ, the Word, among man.

The Word was the seed that sprouted, grew, and flourished into the tree of life, visible at the surface of time. Its roots ran deep into the eternal Rock, with branches, leaves, blossoms, and fruit extending into time from the beginning, revealing qualities and power of the invisible Creator. All vegetation is a continual evidence of the seed of its kind in the fruit thereof. So the fruit of creation has the seed of its kind as originally sprung from the Word that was power to produce it all as it was. This Word is the force of all forces; the power of all powers; the magnet of all magnetism. He is all in all and reveals Himself in His own way most effectively to produce the best final result. All His attributes, so plainly manifest and glorious in creation, are far deeper and grander in redemption. The Word is not only among fallen man, but takes His place and stands in His stead before God as the guilty one; lives among sinful man as the righteous one; suffers the penalty unto death and the grave in order to save and rescue man from his slavery in sin and set him free before God and so obtain peace forever.

The origin of the plan of redemption can be traced direct to the heavenly Father's heart, full of love for fallen man. The Word gives full utterance to this in His life, death, and resurrection. He and the Father saw there was none other that could cross that awful chasm that sin has made and live through it all, having power within to come back from death and the grave. The Word placed Himself in the place of the lost man in humility, suffering, torture, and death. He poured out His blood on the earth where the sin was committed and established obedience unto death where disobedience reigned in terror and sin.

Jesus is the Word most significant to our hearts, in effect of expression and communication. Let us open our hearts for the full meaning of the Word and so receive the soothing power that it gives of its virtuous inspiration of forgiveness, peace, joy, love, and the kindling of the new life in our hearts by its life-giving power. When the Word became the Mediator between the Father and lost man, the Word gave signs that man better understood, because they were of common things, and connected there with a deeper spiritual meaning that the Word stood for and made special covenants to connect with certain observances and at the same time had a revelation in them concerning the meaning of the Word. Let us read these signs and learn their meaning, concerning the Word itself and His office as Redeemer and Restorer.

A body was prepared for the Word and the sign was that He should be lying in a manger. There were numerous other signs connected with the Word becoming flesh to dwell among us. The Holy Spirit, like a dove, descended. The Voice said: "This is My beloved Son," also that His bones should not be broken, nor should His body see corruption in the grave. All these signs are centered in Christ Jesus, who is the meaning and fulfillment of it all unto us. His life on earth is the living Word completely expressing God's will toward man. We can read this Word and learn its meaning in regard to the plan of salvation through redemption and restoration.

The virtues of this living, inspiring Word went out to the needy of all classes; no matter what the ailment might be; whether the body, the heart, or the spirit of man suffered, in Him was virtue and ready help for all. The Word revealed a deep reverence and adoration for the Father and developed a constant need of communion with Him. The Word, of itself, craved the humblest obedience

to the Father; an intense desire to do His will to the utmost was Christ's pleasant duty. The Word gives the fullest expression and reveals the deepest and most significant meaning of its live mission in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the Cross, where the Word utters: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Having said thus, He gave up the ghost.

The Word was hung on Calvary's cross for us, died in our stead. His body was laid to rest in the grave for three days until the resurrection morn.

The Word that was in the beginning, on the cross, and in the grave, was Himself the life of all life and so rose from the grave, victor over all opposition. He proved Himself to be the same Jesus after the resurrection as before, to the satisfaction of His mother and His disciples, including doubting Thomas.

After fulfilling His mission as Redeemer, He prayed the Father to send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter; He also told the disciples to continue to pray until the Holy Ghost should come upon them in great power. He said He was going to the Father, but would come again and receive us unto Himself in the fullness of time. Thus "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." His mother perceived the Word and it meant to her all that a holy Son means to a mother. The angels saw the Word and to them, it meant all that their song contained. The shepherds saw the Word and to them, it revealed all that the sign implied. The wise men saw the Word and they worshipped Him and gave presents. Simeon saw the Word and interpreted it as salvation to him and all the world. John saw the Word and read it right: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." Peter saw the Word, and understood its meaning

for he said: "Thou hast the words of eternal life and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." The disciples to Emmaus saw the risen Word, who revealed Himself so their hearts were burning with the living eternal truths. Thomas saw the risen Word and pronounced it to be: "My Lord and my God."

This is the meaning of the Word as interpreted by Himself: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me." Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. "And ye are my witnesses of these things. All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you, always, even unto the end of the world." These words revealed all to the disciples that is implied therein and they received the miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit that has continued ever since, notwithstanding all opposition. It is the working of the power of the Word among man unto salvation which can not be quenched. To us that now live, this Word becomes doubly interesting, for we read there the fulfillment of all prophecy concerning Him as completely finished on the cross. We have the covenant of all covenants in His blood carried out to the letter and Spirit from God's side in Christ's death and resurrection. Since all is finished according to the covenant, we must accept that as a fact, not in general terms, but each one personally; that is, for

me alone, as if there was no one else but the Father, the Son, and myself.

The Word has proved that He is the life of all life in the beginning and on the cross and in the grave. The Word makes plain the bountiful stream of life in Christ Jesus and that our lives should flow into it and be hidden in His life. Our prayers should unite with His on the cross. "Father forgive," yes, forgive me, and the prayer to send the Holy Spirit should be joined by mine: "Send it upon me, even me."

His life is our city of refuge to which we should flee when the destroyer is after us. He has once conquered the destroyer and death by His life, and is the safe foundation to build upon. God, the Father, looks down on earth and what does He see along the stream of time? With Noah, He sees the rainbow; with Abraham, He sees circumcision; with Moses, He sees the blood, the serpent of brass, the mercy seat, and all memorial institutions, and on Calvary, He sees His own Son. All these remind Him of the covenants connected with each and of His part to the contract. Under these circumstances, can we think God will not fulfill His word? No, never; such a thing would be impossible.

On the other hand, God's plan of salvation and restoration is set in motion by His mercy and love, and as long as these keep moving, there will be day and night to all living hearts. The rain will fall on the just and the unjust alike, so will the sun shine and all things common to mankind will happen to them tempered with mercy and love in a world of sin.

The Savior's life removed unrighteousness from the earth and established righteousness; so the Father, looking down on earth, sees and acknowledges this righteousness as complete. The price was paid by the blood and the

guilty man, before God, stands free. All this, the Word reveals in the plainest terms. Do we believe it to our salvation? The Word came to our first parents in their innocent state and told them the truth, but the serpent, the father of lies, also came and told his deceitful falsehood, which, when heeded, caused the fall. Man did not fall so low but the voice of the Word could reach him and awaken him to consciousness. The Word, the Truth, the Way, the Life has ever since been striving in all these ways and methods to persuade lost man that the serpent told a lie and should not be believed. The truth as it is in Christ Jesus and as revealed by the life of the Word and its recorded history, the Bible, should be believed and the promises relied upon according to the covenant therein. The Word has told His story and proved it. The serpent has told his story and deceived us. Shall we remain in deceived unbelief or accept the truth? If we accept the truth, the truth will make us free. If we refuse to believe the Word, He becomes a lie to us because we make Him so unto us by not believing what He says to us concerning our salvation; but give our lives to destruction by heeding the tempting serpent.

The Word has gathered up abundant evidence of its truthfulness, so much so that prophecy has been positively stated, which is history written in advance, and history is the recording of what has transpired. Let the two histories be compared by careful and thoughtful reading and research and the result will guide us to wise conclusions. The cities whose complete destruction was foretold are yet in ruins. Those kingdoms whose downfall was predicted have not risen again to power. All prophetic revelations concerning the Jews have come true and they are scattered among all civilized governments of the world, having no country, nor ruler, yet remaining one people with one religion. All

earthly power combined—rulers, statesmen, and armies—has not been able to overcome the result of the prophecy.

God's plan is not to be set aside, nor to let His purposes be defeated in the end; but He works marvelously and with patience. The ruins of cities that have been in quiet slumber for centuries have been stirred up by men interested in archæology. The result has strengthened man's belief in the truthfulness of the Bible. To the rudest and lowest condition of unbelief in man's heart, Christ extended the plan of salvation and there can place the spark of eternal life and, from its ruin, establish the fact and truth of the new life in Christ Jesus. This life will truly repent of the old life, exercise the good judgment of a repented choice of living the new life, and express the determination of a repented will to serve Him continually and receive the reward.

To all who entertained the hope of an earthly Kingdom in splendor, with Jesus as the King over them, and to those who enviously wanted Him out of the way, Christ's death on the cross and burial in the tomb represented the ruins. But from these apparent ruins, Christ raised Himself up and established the strongest evidence possible that the story of the Bible is true and that He is the center of it as well as the beginning and the ending. Unbelief has ever since tried to do away with this strong evidence; but the facts are as we now find them: that all foretelling by unbelief concerning the destruction of the Bible has proved untrue and the Bible is more read and studied now than ever before.

In the face of all this, there is a vast difference between the scientific, doubting man, in search of truth, who will eventually find it and the indifferent unbeliever in search of nothing. For such person, any revelation, let it be ever so evident and beneficial, will have no value, nor cause any

awakening from his slumber. Before Christ ascended to the Father, He made it plain that the Holy Spirit should come to earth and do His mission, and also that He, Christ, should come again and take His beloved to the heavenly mansions, for where He is, we shall be also. He will then be the Restorer as He is now the Redeemer.

We can, with joy and composure, look for Him, who believe on Him to our salvation and fully rely on His promises. He is the Word in the beginning, on the cross, and before the Father. His life, death, and resurrection on earth took place according to the recorded prophetic revelation written in the Bible. Profane history and the working of the Holy Spirit confirm it. The Spirit's witnessing with our spirit makes us the strongest evidence that the Bible is the word of God, and that the Word is God, and that we are invited to share eternal glory with Him.

Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill.—Isa. 5:1.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BELOVED IN THE GARDEN.

Solomon's Song 6:2. My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the garden and to gather lilies.

We are well aware of who it is that is speaking here and of whom this is spoken. It is the bride complimenting her bridegroom, who has come down to make her a visit. The beds of spices attract his attention. He takes great delight to be among them. These beds of spices are the lives of Christian men and women whose undivided service, fervent prayers, and adoring praise ascend like incense before God, a sweet savor. Our thoughts as well as deeds, be they good or bad, rise up before Him and testify of our conduct. It is God, the Son, that always comes down to man for no one can see God, the Father, and live on earth. All communications from the Father to man come through the Mediator, God, the Son, and often by some chosen manservant worthy of the important mission. God came down to our first parents in the garden of Eden and they enjoyed His pleasant presence and communion very much for a time. His coming did not cease with their fall in sin of disobedi-

ence, for He came to them after that, also, although an unwelcome visitor at first. He told them the consequences of the fall, its awful and far-reaching results, but also the hopeful assurance of the release and the remission therefrom through the Savior's incarnation, death, and resurrection, by the fallen individual's faith confided in the efficacy of its saving and lifegiving power. God came to the erring ones in love and through grace offered salvation by faith to all who will accept it. The sacrifices of Cain and Abel went up before God, one with more pleasure and satisfaction than the other, and in like manner the response came down as an answer to their different service and devotion. The notice of this difference caused Cain to slay his brother, whose blood went up unto God and testified. God comes down and asks Cain where Abel is. To this he gives the evasive answer declaring that he is not his brother's keeper. But when God states that it was his brother's blood that called Him to come down, Cain pronounced judgment on himself. In like manner our thoughts and deeds rise up before God and when we are really made to feel in our hearts in God's presence what we have done, and know that He sees it all, there is no other refuge but to flee to Him and confess it just as it is and just as we are. Therein is salvation, release from guilt, and protection.

God set a mark on Cain so it should not happen to him according to his own sentence aroused from the consciousness of his guilt. Noah is a bed of spices in his generation and God comes down to him and in close communion develops a wonderful Christian character of persistent, patient, and devoted service. But his own work and corresponding faith in God saved him and his whole family. This is not all: when the flood was over, Noah, from his own free will and heart's inclination, built an altar, took of the animals, and sacrificed unto God. This sweet-smelling

savor brought God down and He then and there showed His approval, and entered into a binding and a very important covenant with Noah, never again to destroy all people with a flood for all time. As a token thereof God set the rainbow in the sky, whose distinct, yet luminous, blending colors speak to all succeeding generations including us, of God's faithfulness to perform what He promises. Let us think of and appreciate this all-significant covenant and resolution between God and Noah and apply its wholesome lesson to ourselves for profit. The same can be said of Abraham and his house. He is a bed of choicest spices, worthy of the keenest study and admiration. The noblest Christian qualities are here brought out so real and true in the height of man's implicit confidence in God and the depth of his humble submission to God's will as exemplified in Abraham's whole life. This savor of his life ascends like incense before the Lord and results in Him coming down to visit Abraham in his tent. There the most intimate communion takes place while they dine together. God discloses His innermost secret by telling His intention of destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham feels the effect of this close relation and at once takes advantage thereof by pleading for mercy in behalf of the two cities. He is successful to the extent of saving all that was worth saving according to Abraham's standard, for He wanted the righteous saved. He is rewarded for his faith and righteousness by being selected to become a father of a great and mighty nation while he had no children and was advanced in years. His faith and reliance, however, is not wavering in the least and after many years of patient waiting a son is born unto him. This increases the trust and confidence in God, but he also meets the severest test in his life, for he is told by God to go and sacrifice his only son in whom the promise was centered and by whom it should be fulfilled. In obedi-

ence to this command Abraham gets up early in the morning to accomplish what God required of him. For three days, Isaac was dead to Abraham, so to speak, and at the climax of the test God staid the hand that held the knife by saying, "It is enough." Abraham's test was complete and he received his son back to life again. This interesting event foreshadows Christ's death and resurrection and points down to him with the utmost accuracy and precision, while Abraham's faith in the reality fulfilled in Christ was counted to him for righteousness. God came down to Isaac and renewed the covenant with him and the blessing was transferred to his son, Jacob, to whom also God came down when he had to flee from home on account of his misdeeds. Jacob at Bethel vowed to God if He would help him he would serve God faithfully. He seems to have forgotten this and for many years went on with his checkered and somewhat questionable career until finally God comes to him again and reminds him of his early promise, and tells him to go and fulfill the same. Jacob's cry and later deeds brought God down and engaged in a wrestle with Jacob all night long before He gave up, but after the struggle Jacob became a different man and received a new name, Prince with God. He was blessed with much property and many children, among them the most conspicuous, Joseph, the beloved son, who really was blessing personified not only to his father and brothers, but to all people and nations as well.

To Joseph God comes down and develops the most perfect character in all Christian graces ever set forth in the Bible. Joseph had varied experiences from being a slave to the ruler next the king in Egypt. He passed through adversity as well as prosperity, avoided snares, and withstood temptations. He continually adhered to truth and righteousness during his whole life. His loving and for-

giving spirit to the erring, his humble, submissive obedience and universal blessing extended to all, makes him a most true and descriptive type of the Savior Jesus Christ.

Moses, the deliverer, is another bed of spices to whom God comes down with a special message to go and deliver His people from their bondage in Egyptian slavery. God had trained him to do this work and gave him assurance that He would be his continual support and guide. Moses, having so strong faith in God, was able to accomplish this work so well that he received as the reward thereof a full entrance into the heavenly promised land, while Israel was only permitted to enter the earthly.

Elijah, the sacrificial high priest, also is a bed of spices in his time, to whom God descends in a most miraculous manner in answer to his earnest prayer on Mount Carmel, and decided with fire that Jehovah was the only true living God in Israel, and deserved their undivided service and devotion.

All these instances and many more too numerous to mention, form, as it were, a token like the rainbow of God's faithfulness to do what He has promised and to visit humanity in special manner at critical periods and bring about His work through His chosen servants. He also sent messages through angels, and last, by His own Son, when He really came down among us and first appeared in Bethlehem as a child. Jesus Christ is the visible God that has come down. He came to the arms of Simeon who was continually in the temple, praying and serving God. Simeon was a bed of spices from whom incense ascended and to whom the Son of God descended.

In the host of witnesses for God there appear these selections more prominent, forming, as it were, a rainbow of decided, blending Christian colors, as continual evidence of God's faithfulness among the threatening clouds and as

an index points down to Christ who is the fulfillment of all the law and the prophets. He has come for us all, rich or poor, high or low, young or old, there is no difference. He is the same Redeemer to us all. O depth of wonder! The Son of God appears among us as the Son of Man in person, as a child. He came for a noble purpose. He had duties to do, a mission to perform, a plan to carry out. He came down to feed among the beds of spices. He must be about His Father's business and it was His meat to do the will of the Father. He had a strong desire and continual longing that could not be satisfied with anything else than to do the will of God. He could, seemingly, neglect His duties to His earthly parents in order to be about His Father's business. He could be isolated from all human beings in the wilderness forty days, tempted by the devil. He would be alone in the mountains all night long after a hard day's work in communion with the Father concerning His will and humanity's welfare. His whole life was devoted to help the needy, the helpless, and the outcasts among the lost race. He chose to be despised, rejected, and forsaken for our sake. He finally gave Himself unto death on the cross in humble, submissive obedience to God for our ransom. His agony in Gethsemane, scourging before the people, torturous death as well as the outrageous, hideous utterances of the enraged multitude, only adds to the testimony, "Not my will but thine be done."

He came down to feed in the garden, truly. It is our beloved Who has come down from the glory with the Father to do His will on earth for our salvation that we can obtain life and the blessing of peace with God by faith in Jesus Christ. He came and accomplished all He purposed and proclaimed on the cross that all is finished, and then the spirit separated from the body. He was laid in a new tomb, but His body did not see corruption, according to the

Scriptures, and also as it is written, the grave could not hold Him, for He was the Resurrection and the Life. The conquering Hero is risen, the strongest evidence of victory over the wages of sin, death. He remained on earth forty days and in various ways abundantly manifested to those who believed in Him that He was the same Jesus who was with them before He suffered and died. Having done this, He ascended up to the Father from the midst of the disciples and now, in the presence of God, He is our advocate, pleading in mercy for us and continually making intercessions in our behalf.

But He did not only come down to feed among the beds of spices. He also came to pick lilies. These lilies grow in the garden where they have been planted by His own hand and are cared for by Him from whom they receive their life. Their pure white color has been obtained by being washed in His crimson blood and have become spotless and beautiful in the sight of God. They are the choicest of His own selection. These lilies are the true Christians in all ages, and often grow in humility and obscurity, like the Master himself. They are many times unnoticed by the world, even shunned and little thought of. Nevertheless they are very precious in the eyes of our Beloved. They are tenderly cared for until the time comes that they shall be picked; then His own hand gathers them and transplants them in the eternal flower-bed where they will abide forever and neither wither nor decay.

The disciples were His first choice. He called them one by one from their humble occupation in life to follow Him and receive proper instruction and encouragement, besides a perfect example in His daily life among them. He gave them power to perform miracles and sent them out to heal the sick, restore the lame, feed the poor, give sight to the blind, and proclaim to all that Jesus Christ, the Savior of

the world, has come to receive them. They were successful to the extent that many were added to the little band. They also met with serious opposition. The disciples did not have but a partial understanding of God's plan of salvation and cared not at first, for much was reserved to be revealed to them by experience. The Master knows best what to teach and when His lessons may become the most effective and best remembered by them. With all their shortcomings and erroneous ideas, He was very patient and showed them a deep sympathy. He knew what was in man and His object was to develop that which was good so the people at large could see and learn. This is beautifully set forth in the conversation with the woman who answered Him, "The dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table." Her great faith was fully developed in this, her answer, and she received help accordingly. For all the good the Savior did, He received but comparatively little recognition. Especially is this true of the Pharisees and high priests, who invariably planned against Him, even to taking of His life. They devised to put those to death also who were immediate subjects for His love, compassion, and help. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Pharisees planned to put him to death; for if they allowed him to live, he would be too strong evidence of Christ's power, and all would believe in Him, by reason of His miracles.

As the days passed by, Jesus began to tell His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go away and revealed to them little by little in what manner. They, however, did not then understand Him. Toward the last, He gave them special instructions as recorded in the Gospel of St. John, beginning with the fourteenth chapter, and containing many comforting words of deep sympathy for them, and closing very properly with a prayer to the Father for them, in their presence. We can read these words today the same as the

day they were spoken. They have the same comforting effect on us as they had on them, for they are words of life and are addressed to the needy in proper season, so as to relieve them. That all His teachings and service should not be forgotten, and in memory of Himself, He instituted the Lord's supper for a memorial feast. Having eaten the passover, He took the bread, broke it, gave to the eleven disciples and said: "This is my body, broken for you;" and likewise the cup was passed as an emblem of His blood poured out for a remission from our sins; and, as often as this was done, let it be in memory of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. What an appropriate, solemn, impressive memorial sermon, conferring unspeakable blessing on all who are fit to partake thereof. After singing a hymn, they crossed the brook into the garden of Gethsemane, so it can truly be said "My Beloved has gone down into the garden." Here the disciples became heavy with sleep while Jesus went a short distance from them to pray. This was repeated three times. We can now see Him in the greatest agony, pleading with His Father to have the cup pass away without drinking it, if possible, but also added, as earnestly, "Not my will but thine be done." Here He really learned, it seems, the Father's will to the uttermost, and as fully determined to fulfill every letter according to the law and the prophets. Here He was feeding in the garden as well by doing the will of the Father. God's will must be done. The lost race must be saved. Jesus, the Son of God, was the only one who could do this. He was willing to make the sacrifice and did so. Not one of the disciples were awake to speak a comforting word to Him during this trying hour. Having passed through this, the enemy had come, and He gave himself into their hands after showing them that He had power to resist and could command legions of angels to defend Him. But nothing

of the kind was done for His own protection. The only plea was in behalf of His disciples to let them go. He was a freewill offering without blemish, as a lamb led to the slaughter. Jesus was taken by the soldiers, led to the high priests, Pilate and Herod. At all these places, at each one in a peculiar way, He was mocked, reviled, and rejected, and an increasing demand was made for His life, from the enraged multitude. In their presence, He was scourged, crowned with thorns, arrayed in an old mantle, with a reed in hand, all representing mock royalty; and yet there was no sign of sympathy that could be aroused for Him among that bloodthirsty mob. They bowed their knees, shook their heads in their anger, and cried: "Crucify Him!" Being sorely pressed by that multitude, Pilate reluctantly gave consent to have it done. Jesus carried the cross to the place where He should be crucified and there was nailed to it and raised up among two malefactors, one on either side; and there, in view of and surrounded by that enraged people, Roman idolatrous soldiers, in the most bitter agony, He bowed His head and said, "It is finished," and His spirit was commended to His Father's hands. Where sin, shame, and hatred were mostly manifested, there grace abounded much more; for He prayed the Father to forgive them for their evil deeds; and to show His saving power by grace, He forgave the sins and saved one of the malefactors crucified by His side, who cried to Him for help and proclaimed Jesus innocent, and acknowledged Him as King before the whole people. He wanted to be remembered by the dying King in Paradise. This thief, or robber, is worthy of more than passing notice. He was fastened to the cross as a malefactor; as a sinner on the cross, he repented of his sins, received pardon by grace from Jesus Christ, proclaimed the gospel of salvation to his other brother in sin, who was in the same condemnation and on the verge of dying. Be-

sides this special message to him, it was intended for all who stood by and all generations to come that he preached the power of salvation by the blood of the then dying Lamb of God. It can be said that the malefactor really died as a martyr for his faith and confession. A man with that belief and decided public expression among that class of people would not have been allowed to live. If he had not already been on the cross he would, soon after these utterances, have been crucified as was his confessed King.

We remember the same class as they stood around Lazarus' grave after he was raised from the dead. They not only wanted to slay Jesus but Lazarus also; and there is no evidence that they have repented by this time but rather become worse. From this bed of spices in the garden, the prayers of Jesus and the malefactor ascended like incense, and the answer to them came down in the presence of all standing about there. Our Beloved came down into His garden among the beds of spices to feed and to gather lilies. It was His meat to do the will of His Father. He did His Father's will among men, in the garden of agony and on the cross. We are now redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ unto God. He should not only feed in the garden but also came down to pick lilies. The repentant thief had just like a lily burst forth in Christ's righteousness provided for him as white and spotless as the Savior's blood could make it. He was really a pure-white lily. The Beloved, with His own hand, picked him up and carried him through the valley of the shadow of death, and he was transplanted that day in Paradise. God has shown us that He is merciful and can save instantly, as the thief on the cross. He has shown likewise that He is patient and longsuffering by giving the generation of Noah one hundred and twenty years in which to repent, and to those who crucified His only Son He extended their lives, that they

might repent and live. One is as much God's plan as the other, although we can not at all times reconcile them. Although the soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross, they were only our agents. It was the sin of the world ripened to full maturity that caused Jesus to be crucified. Each individual's sin was represented and did his share to lash Him with the scourge, press on the crown of thorns, fasten Him to the cross, and thrust the spear that pierced His side. We must feel that we have a part in causing the Savior's death in the depths of our own hearts for then we can not doubt the deed and then we are the most fit to accept God's grace through faith and be fully released from this awful guilt and realize the cleansing power of His love that gives us peace with God. The Spirit seals this on our hearts with an everlasting assurance. Let us remember as in the olden time the priest made the blood of the lamb to flow for his own sins as well as the people's, so we had a part to do in slaying the true Lamb and in pouring out His blood. We made righteous blood to flow for our own sins and this blood is what saves us by faith and grace. It is a God-given grace to be able to accept salvation free of grace by faith.

Our Beloved has gone down by the hands of righteous men into a new tomb, and there rested until the glorious morn, when He arose; for death and the grave could not hold this victim because He was the resurrection and the life. All had taken place according to the scripture and this should encourage us to implicitly put our confidence in Him and His word and trustfully rely on His promises.

In every community where prayers ascend, Christ comes down in answer with blessings. From the churches where prayers go up to the throne of grace, our Beloved comes down and meets the members. From the home that sends up prayers to the Father, He comes down with the answer.

He comes down to the individual heart that cries unto Him with blessings, words of life and comfort. He comes down in the community, and, from the church and home, He gathers the lives in budding spring, in blossoming months, and in the ripe harvest season. Are we His choice, and ready when He comes? Our Beloved has come down into His garden to feed and pick lilies. He is also coming again to receive us unto Himself.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.—Rev. 22:17.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BRIDE IN THE WILDERNESS.

Solomon's Song 8:5. Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

Here we behold two persons, side by side, journeying along life's pathway, one leaning on the strong arm of the other. They are interested in one another. They have left the same place and are on a journey to the same destination. There is something peculiar about them that awakens curiosity and attention among those who see them. They inquire who is this that walks so agreeably and leans so confidentially on him whom she loves. They are coming up from the wilderness and are on the way to the Father's house, their eternal home. In answer to this question, we can say it is the true church of Christ, showing her full love, devotion, and companionship, to her Beloved, Jesus Christ. He is to be the Bridegroom, she the bride. She is delighted in His company and leans on Him for support through the wilderness. He found her a slave in bondage and severe servitude, lost from her father's home, bewildered and suffering for want of proper food, raiment, and place of rest. In this awful, indescribable state, she saw

no way of bettering her condition and had no hope for the future.

The Son left the Father's house, and went down into the wilderness in search for the lost one. He went over the mountains and across the dreary, dry plains, seeking for her. He searched and longed to see her. He called out to her so she might hear His voice and stop. He finally finds her in a miserable, destitute condition, in need of food and water, for it was a barren, dry wilderness, dark and dreary. He had with Him light and life and offered them as a gift if she only would accept them. She did so and her eyes were opened and new life throbbed in her heart as she met Him who showed such love and sympathy. She realized that love begets love and the spirit life must have nourishment to feed on and a suitable robe to wear. He brought all this and more for her use and comfort, indeed all that was needed on the journey.

No wonder she will cling to Him who found her in, and rescued her from, that miserable, destitute condition, and proved just such a companion to her as she needed. She will always remember this and appreciate His loving kindness so free. She will ever be true to Him, let come what will. She is contented by His side and has full confidence in His guidance. Her thoughts often revert to her former days but only the more to adore and admire Him, who then in her plight selected her as His only choice and offered His assistance and support through the desert of sin to the Father's house where the marriage will finally take place.

The Bible presents many true Christian characters showing how strong, as a body, the church of Christ is, when resting on the only Rock of Salvation. Peter leaned on Him for boldness to speak as he did on the day of Pentecost. It was the same Peter who denied the Master as He was about to be crucified, but Peter has learned by that sad

experience that it is far better to confess the Savior under all circumstances than to deny Him in face of imaginary danger.

Peter met the same loving Master after the resurrection as before although he had denied Him thrice. Three times, Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him. Peter answered: "Yea; Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest I do." This face to face confession of his love and devotion brought out the duty of Peter to feed the sheep and the lambs. Peter was one of the three disciples with the Savior on the mount of transfiguration. He, with the other disciples, stood by when Jesus ascended and heard the commission to go and proclaim the good news to all people beginning at Jerusalem, where they should remain praying until the Spirit should come down with special power. The Spirit descended and they received His power and began to preach the gospel to those assembled.

John leaned on the Beloved continually and perhaps more fully delineates Christ's love than any of the rest of the disciples. We have reason to believe this from reading his letters, which he wrote so full of exhortations to love God and the brethren. The gospel also goes further and deeper in showing Christ's close relation to the believers and their dependence on Him. This revelation is a marvel and shows what can be done through a person who yields himself up entirely to the influence of the Spirit. He had a clearer insight into God's plan of redemption and restoration than any of the disciples.

Paul, in his erring, bewildering condition and rage of persecution in the desert of sin, had a great light come to him and stopped him in his way. This shows how the light first comes to a person, and when it comes, he stops and finds himself in an atmosphere where he can partly see his condition and feel his misery and attain an inquiring mood.

This light showed Paul where he should go and what he should do. This is in accordance with Christ's own words. He goes like a shepherd to seek and to save that which was lost. Here the light sought Paul and gave him instruction for him to follow. He went as the light showed him and there was a man with special instruction what to say to Paul when he arrived. This is a marvelous conversion of Paul and serves to change him entirely. His enthusiasm, zeal, and loyalty to Christ and His doctrine became even greater than in his persecution of the church before. This shows the change this new life brings about in a convert. Paul joined the church of Christ and leaned on Him through good report or bad, with friends or foes, in prosperity or adversity, even in imprisonment and martyrdom. He leaned on Him most assuredly while he fought the good fight and ran the race set before him until he obtained his reward, the crown of victory which awaited him and all members of Christ's church.

Stephen leaned on our Beloved and found a strong support. He was filled with the Spirit and saw heaven open and angels, standing ready to welcome him home to Abraham's bosom. We see that the early Christians were prospering and they dwelt together in peace and harmony, enjoying church fellowship under the leadership of the apostles. Now, when persecution arose and they were called on to give up their lives for their faith and profession in Christ Jesus and for advocating the doctrine concerning His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, this stern opposition made the church lean on her Beloved more firmly than ever and cling to Him more closely. The church found Him to be just the right one to support her, and she reached out for His strong, helping hand that could defend and protect her, and could unify the small group in stronger

faith and devotion to Him who called her from darkness and bondage to freedom and light.

What stronger evidence do we need of the church's fidelity to her Beloved than that recorded on history's pages of the persecution of the saints during the long, dark ages. It is heart-rending and makes one shudder to read the history of the martyrs when so many millions gave up their lives rather than give up their faith in Christ and their hope of future life of peace and joy. We do not think of this evidence seriously enough and therefore we do not feel the strong assurance that we should. These people leaned on their Beloved on their way of persecution through the wilderness. It was indeed for them a difficult journey, connected with all possible hardships. Their experience served to unite them closer and with faith depend on Him more fully. They had a steadfast eye on the reward and a heart set on no other object than the Beloved and how best to glorify His name on earth. Not only was the rage of persecution against the lives of the Christians, but their persecutors destroyed in great number the Christians' Bibles and religious books that were so dear to the believers to comfort them in their troubles and distress. The plans of worship were also destroyed. In fact, it is indescribable and we can hardly divert our thoughts so as to get a clear idea of the atrocities perpetrated to the church of Christ. During all this she remained loyal in love, devoted in virtue, to her Beloved.

Since that time the church has enjoyed more freedom and has been expanding marvelously. The gospel is spreading faster now than ever before and more persons are proclaiming the truth abroad. Many millions of Bibles are scattered among all nations and peoples. The church of Christ is flourishing and her ambition is to be pleasing in His sight and faithful in His service, until He comes to re-

ceive her unto Himself. The church and her Beloved are not always to remain in the wilderness. They are on a steady march away therefrom and have their faces set Zionward to the Father's home. There is to be a wedding day; it is so appointed. The marriage will take place in the Father's house. A feast is to be spread there in the spacious mansion. Now the bride and bridegroom are by the Father's authority inviting the guests to the marriage. The invitations have been sent out ever since the bridegroom was on earth. He more specially left the inviting to the bride. The voice of welcome is extended for all to come to the marriage of the Lamb, for all things are now ready. All classes and ranks are invited. The sick are wanted there; the lame must not be missed for want of proper conveyance to the feast; the blind are to be led to the wedding; the poor are not excluded; the rich are urged to come and make no excuses; sinners of the worst sort are most cordially bidden to take part; no one is left out; so reads the invitation.

All things pertaining to the feast have been arranged; a robe of righteousness is provided for each, as becoming to one as to the other. There is a place at the bountiful table for us all. Sweet music will soothe us without tiring. The bridegroom will serve the guests at the table himself and see to it that nothing is wanted. The cup of each will be filled to overflowing with satisfaction of all the heavenly refreshments of God's grace and love in the eternal home of peace and joy. The call to the feast has been going on ever since pentecost, with more or less responses at different periods. It is going on today. So if you hear the voice do not delay but come now. The marriage will soon take place. It is nearer now than it has ever been at any time before. There is great danger in delay. If you hear the call accept at once and be assured of a place at the feast.

It will be a joyous occasion. The bride will be adorned with wreaths of beautiful flowers and decked with a crown of glittering jewels. She is arrayed in a robe of white and her appearance is very attractive and altogether lovely. The flowers and jewels have been gathered, one by one, along the stream of time, and have been assigned their proper places most conspicuous for ornamentation so the bride shall be perfect in her bridal appearance. The bride has been in co-operation with the bridegroom all along the way through the wilderness in selecting, gathering, calling, and inviting, yes, even urging them all to come to the great joyous feast. How lovely the bride will be in her apparel, with her bridegroom by her side. She has been unswerving in virtue, true in trust, devoted in submission, and constant in love to her Beloved while she was on earth, and now she is His real bride in the Father's house.

There will be no limit to the joy at the marriage. All moves at the undisturbed will and most gratifying pleasure to the unceasing harmonious heavenly music where duty is changed to pleasure and the greatest is servant of all in measuring out endless joy abundantly to the satisfaction of all. We will continually be partakers of the ecstasy of the gracious and glorious reunion. We shall be face to face with the bridegroom and we will be satisfied then. But glorious as it all is, there are many today who are indifferent to it all. While the bride has a foretaste of the peace and joy of the feast to come, she is still urging others to come. The bride is saying come today. The bridegroom has his written invitation out in the New Testament. Read this invitation and to whom it is extended for it may interest you and lead your thoughts to center more on these things than ever before, and conclude by accepting, and go with us. You may become altogether persuaded and accept the company of those who shall meet in the Father's house.

The Spirit is calling also and working among men, making no personal distinction. Our humble position does not bar us. Our lot in this world may not be very desirable, our position unassuming. No one may envy our inheritance, but we can feel assured that to the most humble and unworthy there comes a call at one time or another in life as an invitation to be a guest at the marriage. How important, then, it is to heed the call; for it may not come again. Tarry not, dear friend, for fear He will never repeat the call. Come, lay hold of salvation; accept the new life by faith, and be assured of lasting peace and joy.

We have now learned who it is that comes from the dark, dreary wilderness leaning on her Beloved's strong arm, and why she clings so closely to Him at all times. Our Beloved saw she could enjoy home life with Him forever; hence He went to seek her in the wilderness and lead her home. But it is a distance from the desert of sin to the promised land; so there is a journey to undertake. All the way our Beloved is by our side and carries with Him all provision needed for nourishment, protection, and defense. The church enjoys the contrasting conditions and finds His companionship the delight of her life. While going through the desert of sin, her enemies make sport of her, sneer at her choice, say she will soon get tired of Him, and even try to have her be untrue to Him and desert Him for one more sightly in this world. But all fails, for she is true to her Beloved who has proved His love to her and given His friendship like none other. She shows to the world that she wants her love to run naturally, that is, undisturbed to the right person, where love meets love in full and there is no deception.

A person may be alone and never have heard a note of music. He may be downhearted and bewildered as to any relief; but let a skilled violinist come and use his skill on

the instrument, and he can arouse a new emotion in the despondent one's heart that he has never experienced before. The player knows what he can do for the lowly person, who knows nothing thereof until he feels the effect of music in his heart, borne there through his ears. Just so with our Beloved; He knew what His gentle voice could awaken in the bosom of the lost one in the wilderness and what emotions of love could be aroused by the light of His calm countenance. There is no such satisfaction radiating from the faces of those who ridicule her and speak words of blame and discouragement to her. The church knows the difference as it effects the heart within, of which the persecutors and oppressors of religion of Jesus Christ know nothing

It is a mystery to them but a fact; they have not yet been able to remove nor deny even to their own satisfaction, letting them do the accounting. The true church of Christ lives a life of rich, ripe experience that makes Him dearer for every day. He proves to the church what He really is in the trying hours. He reminds us continually of what is for our best, and keeps us away from all things evil in order that we shall become fully fitted for the home above where the true relation of Christ and the church will be realized.

When we think of all that He has done for us and how anxious He is that we shall be like Him and with Him finally, we ought to seize all opportunities of co-operation with Him. He was in this sinful and evil world among us but did not individually partake in the sin and evil. Now He wants us to follow His example and He will help us to live here and not partake or sanction any of the sins that bring disgrace on Christ and His church, to the ruin of the sinner himself. We find that the church in the past, under more adverse circumstances, showed a very firm and decided stand for Him, and is a living reality of a true virgin

whom nothing could persuade to be disloyal. Now we have more favorable surroundings; no more persecution; and what there is may be considered in so mild a form that we should be able to bear it with grace. Yet there is fear that the church does not show the rosy, healthy color nor the robust action that she did in the past.

Let us be out and at work in God's spiritual universe, and exercise therein and inhale His pure, wholesome atmosphere. By these means and in this way, we will arouse the true Christian life-blood in our hearts, and its ruddy color will be radiant in our faces, and our hearts will beat with fervent love for God and men, while we lean on our Beloved on the journey through the wilderness, on the way to the eternal mansion where the marriage will take place.

The church leans on her Beloved in critical times and momentous occasions, in the interest of herself and the people concerned, which is so beautifully illustrated by Queen Esther. Her people were under condemnation as well as herself, being a Jew. In order to save them therefrom, she went in to the king in the inner court contrary to his supreme decree, on the hope of mercy. She had the golden scepter extended to her by the king's hand. Her daring venture saved herself and people in whom she was interested. We, the church of Christ, can, with our petitions, enter into the inner court of grace where our beloved King is; not contrary to His decree, for we are invited and urged to go in our own interest and those in whom we are most concerned, to find pardon, life, and heaven; the golden scepter of Christian privileges and opportunities will be extended to us and our near and dear friends.

We are assured of a welcome to our King while Esther took so great a risk against the king's command.

We have a solid foundation on which to stand and build. We have faithful promises on which to rely, and a kind invitation to come and lean on our Beloved for help until the journey is ended, and we are safely at home.

But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.—2 Cor. 3:7-9.

By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.—Heb. 7:22.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TWO TESTAMENTS.

Luke 22:20. This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Jesus Christ, our Savior, had spent a life of over thirty years on earth among men, when these words were spoken to His disciples. He was born in a poor family, of no high repute from a human point of view. He was ushered into His ministry in a mysterious way and then and there was acknowledged by God Himself as His beloved Son in audible voice and by a token; the Spirit descended on Him in the shape of a dove, by the banks of Jordan, after He had been baptized by John. The voice was not all concerning Him. It was for us; indeed, the most important part was for us: "Hear Him." These words have a great meaning to us for they call us to give attention to what He would say, and to conform our lives to His teachings.

He lived among the common people in the same world as we do, and met and dealt with the same temptations. It, therefore, is of great importance that He should be heard and heeded. Let us watch His footsteps and follow the inspiration that radiates from His everyday life. Let us listen

when He speaks to the children and says of such is the kingdom of heaven, and they are looked after and cared for as lambs by the shepherd.

He spoke to the blind and they received their sight, and go and proclaim the good news abroad, rejoicing although they were not able to explain the miracle nor knew by what power it was done. One thing was certain with them and that was that they could see and that they had been blind.

He spoke to the sick, and those in any way infirm and by whatsoever disease afflicted, were immediately cured, and they went about their daily work glorifying God for what He had done for them.

He spoke to the dead, and they, in obedience to His voice, came back to life.

He spoke to the sinners the forgiveness of their sins, and they were free from their burden and went in peace, testifying of salvation by faith in Christ. All these became living witnesses of His power over the elements and sin. He spoke to the tempter and he could not induce Him to swerve from the true, fervent path of duty to God and men. He said: "It is written," and referred the tempter to the Bible. This seems to be the proper fortification that can stand all the wily efforts of the tempter. When the word of God rightly quoted, interpreted, and applied, was hurled at him, he left Jesus for a season. This again emphasizes the importance of the voice who said: "Hear Him."

We must read the word of God so that we may become acquainted therewith, if we would be able to make the same proper use of it. If we should meet the tempter and he should offer us inducements as he did the Savior, to deviate from the right way and enter on his wide road of false pleasure and then could not recall a sentence or word from God's promises and teachings, we would have poor chance of defence. But on the other hand, at such moments, if an

appropriate verse from God's word could be repeated, the tempter would flee from us as he did from Jesus Christ. The words that Jesus spoke are the words with which we fight our battles against all powers of evil and rules foreign to the government of God among men on earth. He spoke as one having full power dwelling within to substantiate all that He said, whether it was pertaining to man's body, soul, or spirit. He did not only speak; He also performed things right before the multitude that proved to them that He was more than human. Their own eyes, ears, and intelligence testified to them very forcibly, and what could they do but simply acknowledge it and say it is according to what He speaks.

These things appear to them as mysteries, and so they were in a measure and will be in the eyes of the world for all time to come. But mysterious as they were, the facts are in no way diminished. These things were an everyday occurrence with Him while on earth—to do good to the needy, speak words of comfort to the sorrowing, do deeds of kindness to the undeserving, and sympathize with the outcasts of society, to feed the hungry by the thousands, and to preach the gospel to the poor in spirit.

There was not a void in life that He could not fill to the overflowing of His treasure of wholesome provision. He has by this method endeared Himself to a considerable number of people, especially His disciples who were chosen to be His immediate witnesses. They were in His training continually and received their instructions direct from Him. They had His exemplary life as a pattern before them. He impressed on their hearts that He was Messiah and was to fulfill all the Scripture.

The disciples, as well as the other people, had the idea that when Messiah should come, He would set up an earthly kingdom, while He came to establish a spiritual one. This

kind of kingdom they could not at this time comprehend; but He still continued His teaching. It was now passover and He with His disciples prepared to take part in the memorial. It was in the midst of this feast that the Savior spoke these words: "This is the new testament in my blood." They had finished eating the supper, when Jesus took the bread, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, "For it is," He said, "My body, broken for you;" and He took the cup also and gave thanks, and said: "This is the new testament in my blood poured out as a remission from sin."

Jesus spoke these words. Let us read them and think of them with all due reverence. He was now to leave the disciples, but He did not want that they should forget Him; so He instituted this memorial feast, saying: "As often as ye do this, ye do it in memory of me." They were to observe this feast during His absence, until He should return to receive them unto Himself. He was to leave them through death. His own blood was to be shed for our sins. He says this is the new testament — "in my blood." This indicates that there is another older testament in existence or has been written. This old testament, so called by reason of its being written first, consists of the law, prophets, and the psalms. These books set forth God's covenant with men under different periods in the past by certain persons directly called for that special purpose.

Many covenants have been made between God and men and they have been kept to the letter. God made a strong, important covenant with Noah, and the rainbow of today is evidence of its firm tie even with us. He entered into one with Abraham and his children, and they are among us today as distinct a people as ever, although they have neither ruler nor country of their own.

The fullest text of the testament was written down in the days of Moses when he was the mediator and law giver

between God and Israel. Here we have the author and authority of the testament. The full service was to take place in the tabernacle where God would meet His people and they would there carry out all the ceremonies on their part of the testament, which was pertaining to all the sacrifices, washings, and cleansings of vessels. In the tabernacle were the candlestick, the table with showbread on it, and the ark of the covenant, with the law therein. All was to be done and observed properly and timely. The degree of blessing depended so much on the faithful fulfillment of all the religious ceremonies in their service to God by the people. They were a peculiar people and God revealed His will to them in a special manner. He would meet them in the tabernacle and there give them instruction, more special and direct, through the high priest, concerning their path to pursue and their conduct while on their journey to the promised land.

The covenant in their testament was that they should inherit and possess the land. The old testament was made of effect by sprinkling of water and shedding of blood. The priest sprinkled all the congregation and took the lamb set apart for that special purpose and slaughtered it as a sacrifice for his own and the people's sins and with blood entered into the holy of holies once a year.

This was a very specific testament to the children of Israel. It provided them with a described country of their own, with undisputed possession, and equitable laws to govern them therein, and provisions for their government, and officers, and ruler. In fact, they were to inherit all the actual effects, personal and real, promised by God to Abraham that his children should possess. So Israel was heir to all that is meant by being children of Abraham, according to the testament.

By this covenant, God established and transferred the estate to the children of Israel and in the wilderness they

were on the way to take possession thereof, according to the testament. All this was reduced to writing, in their own possession, and dedicated with blood. Death and shedding of blood must ensue, and is necessary before a testament becomes of effect. All that this testament implies in one sense is figurative and typical language, representing something real to come; and, like an index, points down to the time when that for which the typical stands shall take its place.

A perfect God and man in the same body was born of Mary in Bethlehem. He was the person in whom all figure and types centered and to whom all ceremonies pointed for actual fulfillment. A new codicil to the testament was to be satisfied with greater significance and meaning to all. This covenant is of a higher aim, and bequeathes a greater inheritance, and is added to the old one. The old is not done away with only so far as the typical and figurative is concerned, for they were shadows and vanish when the real comes and takes their place; and now a deeper significance exists in both the shadows and the real; for they both unite their testimony of the same thing. Like two wills in existence, the later does away with the former, only in the new codicils added, otherwise the will in the first is not changed, even if rewritten. So in this case; there are many things mentioned in the old testament as vital and binding as ever. The new testament expresses God's will of inheritance to all mankind, while the old was more especially for the children of Israel.

The old was dedicated by blood of animals while the new was confirmed by the blood of Jesus Christ. He came to be the high priest and the sacrificial lamb as well. He entered with His own blood into the holy of holies. The lamb of old was slain by the high priest. Our high priest gave Himself unto death, but sinful hands slew Him.

The time had now come and Jesus knew it. He was to leave His disciples, but He wanted to be remembered by them. He therefore instituted the Lord's supper in memory of Himself. This new testament in His blood recites that He is our elder brother and that He is the heir of the heavenly Father, as eternally appointed, to whose presence He soon should go. Before He departs, He leaves to us this testament which provides that we have full heirship with Himself to all the glory, peace, and pleasure that can be enjoyed in the Father's house, with the elder brother in the midst of us. Each one is provided with a home in the eternal mansion, a place at the table, and suitable apparel for the great event. This testament, like all others, is not of effect until the elder brother dies. So he must die in order that we can become heirs to this glorious heritage.

Our dear elder brother died on the cross, that ignominious, agonizing, shameful, and torturous death in our stead, that we might live, and inherit according to that rich, hopeful testament.

It was sin in us that caused this awful death of our brother; so we see how sinful sin is and what it leads to. It drags us down from bad to worse, until there finally is no hope, and ends with its unavoidable wages. He died on the cross and was buried in the grave of a righteous man.

The testament now is in full force. His death made it so to us. We are now heirs with Him according to all provisions made with eternal life itself as the greatest bequest; it so reads in the testament. All bequests are conveyed to us as full heirs with Himself in the Father's estate. But the beauty of it all is that He rose from the dead, thereby showing us that he had power over death and that this power was inherent in Him. He could not only raise the dead to life but could raise Himself also. He is the resurrection and the life, and has abundantly proved that to us,

His body did not even undergo any corruption, for the life of life preserved it while He rested in the grave until the resurrection morn. He stayed on earth many days after the resurrection and showed Himself to the believers. His body was changed so He could become visible or invisible to the human eye at His own will. He was recognized by all disciples, including doubting Thomas. He was also seen by the women and by five hundred brethren at one time.

So He established beyond doubt that He was the same brother that was with them before His death. He told them that He should ascend to the Father but should send the Spirit, who would be their comforter and constant companion, such a one as they needed. He would go to the Father and be our advocate there and see that the testament which was now legalized should be admitted to probate before the court of eternal justice.

He would plead our cause by the merit of His own death, and our justification by the efficacy of His blood, by the power of resurrection and ascension into the holy of holies. He is now there, but we have the written testament with us. We hold the written document in our possession. Let us read it and learn all about that to which we have fallen heirs, and how sure it is. We can not reasonably entertain any doubts about what is written in the testament. When we read that He did not falter or swerve in the least from the torture that He went through, in order to justly make us heirs, we can not doubt that He will give us the good things He promised, since He has gone through it all. He wants that we shall avail ourselves of the free opportunities that are offered. He wants us to make sure of salvation, and to strive to enter into the fullness of our inheritance. Let us read of what is awaiting us. One of the disciples that was dear to Him, who knew Him best, and lay close to his bosom

at the memorial feast, who also knew Him after His resurrection, never entertained any doubts about the inheritance according to the testament. This John was in the spirit on an island and there saw many wonderful things which should come to pass, and had explanation from our Brother concerning them. These are part of the testament and it closes with that beautiful description of the new heaven and the new earth, the river of crystal water, and the tree of life, which, together with all things that are lovely and can be enjoyed by immortality, is an inheritance according to the testament.

We should study our testament more and thereby become more interested in our estate. We can find no trace of that John, the one who saw and wrote about these things at the direct command and dictation of the testator, that he lost any interest in it after seeing and hearing what he did. He was the beloved disciple, and his life was always on the increase in devotion, faithfulness, and service. His great experience in the Christian life and severe persecution made him draw nearer to the Savior. His close relation opened up yet greater opportunities for him.

No one has seen and received more instructions and explanations of the future than he; no one has written a better description of our future home nor held out a more hopeful offer for the Christians than he has. We can not but wonder at his writing. But let us not forget that it is the most binding and important part of the testament. It was the Lamb that was slain and is alive forevermore that was talking with John. So there is authority to sustain the statements.

This was many years after the ascension; but notice how interested he is in the churches on earth. He speaks of their angels, stars, and candlesticks. They are provided with protection, and light to shine in the community. He

writes by the hand of John and encourages a true devotion of Christian love and fellowship, to be warm and earnest under all circumstances. He cautions against the tendency to lukewarmness and its awful results, for us to beware and be watchful. It is a dear brother's counsel, in all things pertaining to our welfare and words of comfort. It is also worthy of note that the sinful and deceitful are not overlooked, but we are warned beforehand so we can be on the lookout.

It certainly would be of great value to us if we were more familiar with this part of the testament, for it tells of so many interesting things in a beautiful way. It tells how things were to come to pass and in what succession. We can see where we are in the stream of time, if we watch the compass and dial described in this book. This would have a tendency to wake us up in the watchtower and kindle the lights so that the seafaring passers-by could also see the signs and get ready.

This testament has seven seals on it, so it is acknowledged before the Chief of Justice with His seal thereon. No one could open the seals of the book but one that was Judah's lion; and He opened it by His blood, and, through the Spirit, caused it to be openly read to all people, tongues, and nations. He also rent the veil; so now there is an entrance into the holy of holies beyond the veil.

Our Brother is very interested that we should know how beautiful a place is waiting for us and what great privileges we are to enjoy there. He uses the choicest metals known in describing the material of which the mansion is made, and the most precious stones, crystals, and fine glass as foundations and durable ornamental substance of our house, and the pleasant surroundings. He speaks of the river of living water and the tree of life on both sides of the stream, bear-

ing twelve kinds of fruits each month in the year, and of the heavenly wholesomeness and delicacies for our use.

Into this indescribably beautiful home of ours, nothing sinful will be allowed to enter; so states our testament expressly. No sorrow will be there. The last tear will be wiped away by our dear Brother before we enter there. No sickness will be known, for all is life eternal with nothing to mar. We indeed have it well provided for us when we get to our home, so tasteful to our fancy. All assurance is held out for us to rely on all that is promised us. We indeed have all reason to lay aside all doubt and unbelief and negligence, and become earnest in laying up treasure where nothing will corrupt nor nothing enter to despoil what is so rich and beautiful. This is the testament in My blood, says our Brother. His blood was shed in love for us all. The throne of mercy is overshadowed by His blood where we may in humility bow down just as we are and obtain pardon for our guilt. Let us set the true value of the great effort on the Savior's part to make it plain and sure to us. We can not fully appreciate that He is our advocate before the Father. He stands before the throne of justice, surrounded with the mercy seat on which the sinners are seated while our advocate before the Father pleads our pardon by reason of His own blood being poured out to wash away our sins and to blot out our transgressions — for His sake. He really takes our place as debtor and pays our indebtedness so there is nothing against us. We, on the other hand, take His place as having no debt against us for the burden thereof, and its anxiety we are free from. In this way we are justified before the Father; He can not again demand what has once been paid. But we must believe this or we can not feel the freedom from the burden nor enjoy the peace and tranquility of mind that comes from forgiveness. He redeemed us to nothing less than His equal heirs to

eternal glory in the Father's presence. He is our advocate, and is best fitted to plead. He is acquainted with the heavenly laws of love, mercy, and justice. He knows the heavenly language and phraseology, and can express Himself most effectively in our behalf. We have it well arranged. Our inheritance is a goodly one and our estate is pleasantly located. Let a true interest therein be stirred up within us. We have the testament.

CHAPTER X.

THE VICTORIOUS REST AND SLEEP.

II Chron. 32:8. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord, our God, to help us and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah, King of Judah.

Rest consists not of total idleness, nor of entire inactivity. Life manifests itself even in sleep. The body, mind, and heart require rest of their own peculiar kind. The body can not continually exert itself in muscular energy. The mind will not constantly devote itself to the solution of difficult problems. The functions of the heart are not, at all times, equally perceptible. Each seeks a certain relaxation for regaining new power in a state of rest of its own kind.

Man was created with a need of rest, and therefore, he has a natural craving without that nothing else can satisfy. In various ways, we seek rest. Visionary beds of ease appeal to our imagination. False and delusive invitations are extended to us, but these give no rest nor satisfaction. Because there is a need of rest, there is a proper means provided by Him who said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor

and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In Christ Jesus, there is rest for those who labor, and also for those who are heavy laden at heart. There is rest for all, no matter what weariness or troubles disturb us. Let us seek this solace and fully appreciate it, for it is our blessed privilege. In Christ, there is a peaceful tranquility for the heart, a victorious ease for the mind, and a calm, refreshing rest for the body. All obedience to God's laws is wholesome, be it of body, mind, or heart.

The Son of God, who mused in joy by his Father's side during the days of creation, by whom and unto whom all things were made, rested after His work and has provided the most complete rest in Himself. He knows how to supply his creatures with what they need. He has endowed them with keen abilities to search out this rest in the Creator, which can be found nowhere else. This is the inborn tendency to learn and find out God. This inherent faculty is led astray by the voice of the old serpent when he takes man to all his idols and asks him to fall down and worship them; in this there is found no satisfaction to the soul. This same tempter shows man the beauty and wonderful mechanism of the universe and tries to make him believe that it has all come by chance, but there is no real satisfaction to man's intelligent mind in this; for man will not let his wandering, active mind rest on nothing. It was not constructed that way and refuses to submit to reasoning and conclusion built thereon.

This same deceiver will lead man among the empires and kingdoms of this world and claim that he presides over them all and appoints the destiny by his foresight, intellect, and power. This deluder will present the forms in religion as the only needed essential, but in these, there is no real relief to the heavyladen heart. He tries to teach science without God, philology without the Word, and psychology without

the Spirit; but man has not yet become entirely persuaded that way and never will, for God created man and his functions, which will be at work searching for rest until they find it in Christ Jesus.

Man may wander in error for a time, but will not continually do so. Man has abilities and he uses them in spite of error, deceit, and falsehood. Man will search and work, that he may rest and find the place best adapted for ease of body, mind, and heart. As long, therefore, as man exerts himself, there is hope. He that works shall rest. Man's own experience will teach him the falsity of the ease he seeks and awaken a more intense desire for the true and best rest in Jesus. He tells us to come unto Him and we shall find rest to our souls. This is the only standing invitation that offers rest to the soul and we show our wisdom by heeding the call and go to Him just as we are with all our sins and troubles and we shall find relief.

When our individual sins become a heavy burden upon our hearts, and we can find peace nowhere, we can go to Jesus with it all and be relieved and find peace at heart. He removes what disturbs, annoys, and causes anxiety. He fills the heart with life, joy, and love. We become new creatures in Christ Jesus and all things appear to us in a new light. We see the kingdom that is not of this world and long for citizenship therein. We seek not the pleasure and friendship of this world alone, but live to please our Master for His many blessings upon us. Rest is one of the main blessings and is earned by the contest that results in victory and concludes in peace.

In the kingdoms of this world, there are strife, tumult, and opposition; in God's kingdom, there is peace and harmony. In the many churches of this world, there are selfishness, indifference and carelessness; in His church, there

is unity, triumph, and generosity. In the world, there are wavering belief, variety of baptism, and many false Gods; in Christ is one faith, one baptism and one God, the Father of us all. From the tumultuous commotions in the world at large, from the mythical inconsistent field of science, and from the instigations of war, be it for acquisition, liberty, or against Christianity, we are called to come to Christ for true rest. All difficult problems in life can better be solved in the light of God's word, which leads no one astray, and usually rests the case in full evidence.

The Assyrian king, in the days of Hezekiah, besieged the strong cities in Judah and boastfully used all his art in persuasive language to have Hezekiah submit to his terms. It was a royal display of worldly power with an army that many times outnumbered Judah's. This power had a conquering history to boast of. All diplomatic skill was used to magnify the Assyrian possibility and belittle Judah's chance to resist. But in all this splendid display of power and firmness of successful victory, Hezekiah saw only an arm of flesh. He looked to the true God for help to fight the battle. Hezekiah fully trusted in God's promises and ordinances and did on his part all to express full faith therein. The people were with him, for they rested on his words that had the component elements based on the eternal Rock, and relied on His invincible mighty arm for success. The victory came to Judah to the utter dismay and shame of Assyria and the death of their king. Thus mightily, the Lord God of hosts moves and causes wonders to be performed in the midst of mankind, victories over the wisdom and shrewdness of this world.

The rest in Christ and His word is not essential in this world and in this life only, but is equally needed, or even more so, at the end thereof. It gives the only assurance in death to the heart's great satisfaction. This has been mani-

fested times without number. Stephen's death is one of the most assuring instances of this kind; he rested in Christ's word and fell asleep. He was in the midst of this world's evil rage against him and yet he was calm. He saw the men ready to stone him to death, but he also saw the heaven open, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. This glorious sight took away all fear of the angry multitude, the stones, and even death. He displayed the calmest and most peaceful and forgiving spirit; for "he cried with loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, and when he had said this, he fell asleep." Asleep in Jesus. The world can not produce a scene more indicative of undisturbed peace, rest, and sleep, based on God's words as revealed unto us. Can unbelief produce a reality anywhere like this one described? Certainly not. Can indifference point to his careless pillow as a superior resting place? Not so. Can the doubting scientist offer a nobler tranquility to the body, mind, and heart under such circumstances? We think not. Where shall we turn for rest, but to Him in whom complete rest is found?

Rest is earned by labor. Those who idle their time of work away very often idle their time of rest away also, and so miss the joy of both. They so live that they enjoy neither to the full extent and become indifferent and inactive, which leads to the awful result — neglect — the greatest evil in the world. The instruction is to work while it is day, so shall we rest sweetly, when the proper time comes. All exertion of body, mind, and heart seeks the ease of victory and longs to enjoy refreshment therein. The law of truth reveals the tranquil exhilaration to the body, mind, and soul of man, wherein he may move and rest with greatest ease. This is not always as it appears from the human side in life; as in the case of Stephen. The same calmness that inspired Stephen is held out to us all as a free gift of God

through His son, Jesus Christ, and will be needed by us as certainly in some unavoidable moment. We shall be called to face the last enemy, death, some time, and that courage and composure then will be the thing that God's words give to the needy one, who is to cross the dark, swelling river. There is no other peace and rest than that which comes from the feeling in the heart that we are reconciled with God through the blood of Jesus Christ and have our sins forgiven. In that way, death becomes the gateway into the eternal life of peace and bliss. He also gives us resignation, so we can leave high positions, places of honor in this world, and respond to the call cheerfully. We can leave home, kindred, and dear friends and willingly go to Him. We go but a little while before them; they will soon follow; then there will be that blessed, endless reunion never to be marred by parting nor by the thought thereof.

Let us make sure of heaven. Let us work the work of God now in rescuing the lost that we may better enjoy our rest when we shall finally reach it in glory. From this, we see that there are commotions and unrest in this world. There is apparent controversy in learning and in the proper understanding of facts as revealed to us in the universe, but the discrepancies as they appear are in the human mind and in its incomplete comprehension of creation and its laws, rather than with the Creator. The human mind has not yet found a place of rest aside from the revelation through God's chosen agents. Therefore, the wandering prodigal son of learning in the land of no God will eventually be reduced to want and begin to look in the direction of the Father's house for bread to sustain his body, mind, and soul. He will not be disappointed, for he shall find a feast of knowledge. Political ambition will, like the king, find the great assurance and help to success in the Word of the King of Kings. The tempted heart will find a nest, like the chased

dove, in the Rock that is cleft for us all. Adversity can not drive us from the sure footing on the eternal Rock and its faithful promises connected therewith. The people rested in the King's words, dictated by Jehovah. Let us do likewise, but let us continually remember that activity is the best incentive to good rest. Let us be active in the work that leads to and gives the proper rest. Make every day a Sabbath in the Lord, but when duty calls, let there be no day of rest.

There is rest even when we do our duty. Our conscience rests well when our duties are faithfully done. An easy, peaceful conscience gives true rest to the body, mind, and heart. A guilty conscience gives no rest, but continual worry and remorse. Satan fills the heart of man with desires to do things that will cause a guilty conscience, from which he can not be separated of his own accord. Envy lodged in Cain's heart against his brother, which developed into hatred and matured into murder. He tried to remove the evil in his heart, or to satisfy it, by getting rid of his brother; but found the deed caused a guilty conscience from which he could not escape. It made him a fugitive and vagabond in the earth all his life.

A guilty conscience is not a desirable companion through life and gives no rest nor peace to the body, mind, and soul. This is man's experience in history and biography. Jehoiakim became wroth with God's revelation to man, the Bible, and tried to appease his anger by cutting the book to pieces and throwing it into the fire; but he did not destroy the word of God, nor did he gain a clear conscience; neither did he escape the inevitable punishment for transgressing God's law in his book.

The love of money in Judas' heart caused him to obtain his price for his low deed, but did not give the expected satisfaction, nor did the refunding of the money to the chief

priests do so. His guilty conscience carried him to the greatest extreme, self-destruction. He found no rest nor peace in his choice and deed, though he got the expected price. Satan is the guilty one and he wants to make man guilty also. There is, therefore, no rest nor relief in continued wrong-doing. We must look for it elsewhere. Jesus Christ is the innocent one and wants to make us innocent, also, before God. He can do that and He invites those who labor and are heavy laden to come to Him and rest. Hear His words to the transgressors of the worst sort:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.

“Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

This describes Christ's attitude toward the Jews and the condition of the fulfillment of their saying at the judgment hall when Pilate declared Jesus innocent: “His blood be upon us and our children.” The Jews wanted to get Jesus out of the way and they succeeded in doing so, but they have been in an unsettled, disturbed condition ever since. They will not find any rest nor enjoy peace until they acknowledge Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah; for we must all come to Him and find rest.

All the saints are in God's hand, a place of powerful protection and security that has a satisfaction complete in itself and found nowhere else. This hand of God is in strong contrast to man's arm of flesh. God shows His mighty hand in creation and the universe hangs and moves by its power.

Man's hand is one of the main distinctions that sets him apart from all other creatures and places him nearest to God. The hand of man is an image of God's hand, though weakened by sin in the fall. The hand of man, guided by intellect and inspired by love, will prove itself a marvel in the world. It will take the uncouth material and create it into articles of the finest finish for the use of mankind. The home is a product of the hand and remains secure by its depending power. Those who dwell in the home are provided for by the hand and aided by its untiring effort. The hand produces the sweetest music to the ear, greets our friends in the most tender love, and waves the fondest farewell. The hand is a most wonderful limb that raises us far above all other animals and reveals to us our close relation to God. All the assuring promises and hopeful invitations in the Bible, together with all the warnings and prophetic enlightenment, have been written by the hands of holy men. There is, therefore, a joining of hands by God and man, thereby connecting the inspiring current of useful activity for eternal welfare. There is rest to the weary wanderer in the clasp of a stronger hand, which leads us on in the steep and troublesome path. There is companionship in a mighty arm to lean upon, through the lonely, tiresome places in the journey of life. When it is ended, this gentle hand will gather up the beautiful lives of men in His mighty arms and carry them over the river into Paradise. It is worth while to rest in God's words in preference to an arm of flesh, and heed the gracious and kind invitation: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.—Psa. 111:10.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.—Dan. 12:3.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WISE CONCLUSION.

Ecclesiastes 12:13. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

It is an important person who is speaking these words; therefore it is to our interest to listen. He has a great subject on which he is discoursing. He is discussing the whole matter and is drawing the conclusion of it all, after a careful review. The speaker or writer is no less a man than King Solomon, who is known to be a very wise man with deep, varied experience in all things generally; for he was given to try all things that he could desire. He was anxious to find out all he could about whatever came into his thoughts or to which he took a fancy. It seems that everything was coming his way in this respect; for means and opportunities were added so he could indulge in all luxuries, pleasure, and display without limitation, seemingly. He was highly lauded as a ruler, and was supported by a large, loyal army who were obedient to his will. Riches were lavished on him; so no one of his time was his equal. He lived in a palace and had a host of servants to do the work for him.

He was a great builder as well as ruler for he built the grand temple where Israel should worship God and carry out the religious ceremonies dictated to them by God himself, for they were His peculiar people.

Solomon had a powerful mind with which he did a great deal of planning, and successfully made them materialize into actual facts. This is not confined to any one line, but in all vocations in life he had dealings. His experience was real, not imaginary. This gives value to his words when he speaks, and we can feel assured it is worth while to give consideration to what he expresses, especially so when he has reviewed the whole matter and is summing up the total. Usually the closing words are the most important and have the essence of the previous discussion concentrated in a smaller quantity, easier to remember. At this instance, he says: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter." We may not all have the privilege of so great display and pleasure. We may not all be endowed with so great wisdom and power. But we can all be benefitted by listening to Solomon's experience as he tells it and in a measure follow him to his conclusion. †

No man can live a life like Solomon with such varied participation in all things and with all classes of people, without adding a rich value to every word he utters in public regarding his observation. Solomon was reared and trained in the King's house; for his father was the noted King David, whose powerful, conquering reign was now centered in his son, Solomon. David was a war king and brought all adjoining kingdoms in subjection unto him; so when Solomon ascended the throne, he reigned from a throne of peace and had time to devote himself to the building of the temple, to better organize the government, and to institute more fully the religious worship. He saw the propriety of having the center of government and the center

of religion in the same place and under the same direction. It made the kingdom doubly strong and unified; for a person will make great effort in defence of religion as well as of government. Solomon saw all this and to his wisdom was added his ripe, successful experience.

It was toward the close of his life that he spoke these words. He had tried the home life. He had lived the family life. He had lived a life of great pomp and dressed gorgeously. He had lavished in wealth as a king in his palace. In fact, he denied himself nothing which his desire and imagination could awaken within Himself. Besides all this, he had also tried to live a religious life of humble devotion. Indeed, it was there he got his wisdom. He had also lived a life of sin and shame, from which he at last awoke. After all this, he has this to say unto us: "Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." The total of man's duties is to God, and man for his commandments are to love God above all things, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. To fear God is to hold Him in reverence above all things.

This shows man's wisdom to give God, the Creator, the most prominent place in our hearts as well as in the universe. He deserves this and has proved Himself worthy thereof. We show our good sense by giving everything its proper place and due respect. By reverencing God, we show wisdom by taking our proper place at the feet of the Great Teacher and acknowledge Him as such.

The first sign of good sense of a pupil is when he shows respect for the teacher and a disposition that he is willing to learn of him. Solomon had observed this during his life. Although he was so rich, wise, and mighty, he still considered his proper place was at the feet of the Great Teacher, in fear and in loyal submission, even though he was a king himself. If Solomon saw that this was the conclusion of the

whole matter, how much more need we come to the same conclusion. Let us make use of Solomon's experience and profit thereby. He has written it all down, both good and bad, for our instruction. We have the right to study it all and accept the good, but should shun and avoid the evil. Even he himself tells us to do this. Solomon had a good opportunity to see what a true religious life was and what it could accomplish in aid of good government and peaceful homes, and its valiant defence in their behalf. He saw that the best Christian was the most loyal citizen, the most conscientious lawmaker, and the most trustworthy soldier. All this has its beginning when we first show our reverence to God.

Solomon is not the only one who holds these views. There were men before him who thought and spoke in the same language. We know Job was a man of experience, too. His life was full of experiences, both bitter and sweet; but in all this he constantly held God in reverence, thereby showing his wisdom. He also exclaimed: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Job was rich, respected, and had friends. He was religious, prosperous, and enjoyed life. Suddenly it all changed about. He lost all he had, even his children. He was afflicted bodily with much worse than mere sickness. His former friends falsely accused him in his misery. He met with slight sympathy even from his wife. He lost all, even his health, but through it all, he did not give up his religion nor his faith in God. He accepted adversity as well as prosperity because he feared God, and that is wisdom. He, however, at one time in his life, thought himself almost equal with God and longed for a course of reasoning with Him. This he finally had for God asked Job a successive number of questions, which he found no answer for from within his own power; so he changed his mind and placed himself at

the feet of the Master and found that to be the most fitting place for him.

From that position he got a different view of the whole creation and the Creator. There is not a grander description of the universe than that given by Job after he got his eyes open. He alludes to the sun, moon, stars, and planets, in glowing words. He describes the beauty and grandeur of nature in the most charming language. He pictures the movements of the heavenly bodies in complete obedience to the laws given them by God. He ascribes all wisdom, grandeur, and sublimity as derived from Almighty God whom it is wisdom to fear. He also concludes it all after his full and ripe experience in life, that to revere the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Joshua was a noble, courageous man, with a great deal of wisdom and activity. He took up the work and carried it on from where Moses left off. Joshua's work was to lead Israel into the promised land and take possession thereof; also, to fortify and improve it. He did all this successfully and inaugurated a government where the judge or ruler was chosen from among the people. He appointed cities of refuge to which the offender could flee for justice and safety. He established a good government and the true religion and localized the true center around which both could successfully and harmoniously move continually. He worked hard and faithfully in bringing about what is good, noble, and true among men. Before this conquering hero and his renovating work, the false, the wicked, and degrading must give way. Joshua came in contact with all classes of men and had dealings with them in national, political, and religious affairs.

He was a leader among the people, a ruler in the land, and a father in the home. A wise son submits to his father's commands and honors him in the family, but a rebellious

son does not. A loyal citizen submits with due respect to the ruler of the land, while a person with a rebellious mind and spirit does not, but rather agitates and stirs up strife. Fear is a state or disposition of the mind and heart, which may be in loyal submission or agitating rebellion.

Joshua had learned and experienced this. He therefore admonishes the whole congregation to choose whom they would serve, for he and his house would serve the Lord. At the closing scene of the most noble, exalted stage of his career, he says: "Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in truth." Is this not a glorious conclusion for a man of high position, wide experience, and merited honor? We do well to heed his sayings, to fear God from a loving, loyal heart, so we will not be obliged to fear him from a disloyal, rebellious disposition. God is the great law-giver. His laws permeate the whole creation. Each creature lives and moves according to its peculiar law. A submissive person will fear God in reverence, while a rebellious person will be afraid of Him, because of his own disloyal heart, evil passion, and desire to stir up ill feeling among men toward God.

The pages of the Bible and of history are full of men whose characters are the best and most worthy to follow when they have, from a fervent spirit and a heart constant in love, served God. This certainly means much to a thinking and reasoning person, and can not be read over lightly. It is from men with lofty ideas and great personal experience that the world has been getting better. From them, we can gather the choicest in concentrated form for our assimilation and use. The most proper thoughts, words, and action are direct manifestations of wisdom, which of noble men are most prominent when they express the feeling of their hearts to the highest and noblest object attainable, the Lord of all. We must not lose sight of the fact these men have lived in

he same world as we do, and have had the same temptations to guard against and the same desires to battle with, as we have. They felt an inclination to do wrong and pursue evil as we do. This they had to be continually prepared to meet, in some form or another, and so have we.

They have been tested by their trials severely and come out ready to give us a worthy testimony. This is what makes it so valuable to us for reading and precepts. Job saw the grandeur in the creation, the sublimity of heaven, and the usefulness of the elements in the universe. He knew the value of the different precious stones and the weight and fineness of the metals. Yet wisdom was more desirable to him and the getting thereof a higher prize in his estimation. The wisdom developed by reverence to God has had combats on very decisive battlefields with the wisdom of this world, and has come out more than conqueror.

Daniel began life by fearing God and became a wiser man than all the other wise men in the kingdom. He lived in the midst of all the royal display of Nebuchadnezzar's kingly court and there came in contact with the wisest men in his whole reign. These men exhausted their knowledge and wisdom before the king to his and their sad disappointment. When these men had shown their wisdom to the uttermost and thereby only developed folly, Daniel alone reveals his wisdom which he received from fearing and serving the true God. The king is satisfied with the revelation which Daniel gives and acknowledges the true God as a revealer of secrets. The king rewards Daniel bountifully and makes him ruler over all the wise men in the kingdom. This shows the contrast of the two wisdoms and the glorious success of the one over the other, the idolatrous king himself being the judge.

The spirit of worship can be awakened in man when he is in the presence of some one worthy of reverence. The

king was brought in this mood when in Daniel's presence and under his inspiring influence. Daniel was given a position where he could more fully display his wisdom for the good of the king and all succeeding generations. In all this, Daniel proved equal to the occasion and never swerved from the religion that made him wise and prominent.

Daniel's wisdom was severely tested. Another king arose with whom the wise men had greater influence. They contrived and laid plans against Daniel to do away with him. They succeeded in securing a decree from the king that no God should be worshiped but the one stated by the king. This, of course, was direct against Daniel. In the midst of their plans, and contrary to the king's decree, Daniel continued showing reverence to his God and worshiped Him. He went up in his room as before, opened the windows, turned his face toward Jerusalem, and prayed earnestly and loud to the living God three times a day.

His reverential fear of God made him bold, and he had no fear of the wise men, the supreme king, nor the lion's den. He went down into the den with his religion, conviction, and trust in God who supported and saved him in his severe trial.

Daniel came out of the den a greater and nobler man in the king's own judgment than ever before. But the wise men who had planned wickedly against him met their doom in disastrous grief, folly, and shame. These men acted according to the wisdom of their own deceitful hearts' desire, and showed up in the end a very foolish plan. Men who represent heavenly wisdom have been tried in severe fiery furnaces and have come out genuine and pure. These tested men are as gems among precious stones, retaining their true value and glittering colors in the darkness. The development of the inherent worshiping spirit in man,

properly directed, gives unmistakable signs of wisdom superior to the wisdom of the world.

We have seen that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and that this wisdom has been tested to the uttermost. We have the lives and characters of men whom both the Bible and history acknowledge as great. These men have acted an important part in life in their days and left for us wholesome influence. They were men of courage, zeal, and force of character.

Solomon is another man who had studied God, mankind, and the whole creation with a view of obtaining wisdom. He gained all the knowledge he could and generously leaves us the benefit of his research and experience. He does not say for us to follow his folly and errors but sets them up as a mark for us to beware, for there is a pit into which we are liable to fall.

Viewing it all over in its variations, he comes to the conclusion, at the close of his life, that to fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man.

Job comes to the conclusion that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Joshua's choice was to fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and in truth.

These men have made their choice and arrived at their conclusions by their experimental, enlightened intelligence. It is wise to love the Creator and esteem Him above all else. It is wise to love our fellow men and do unto them as we would have them do unto us. This is the commandment of God, and implies our whole duty. No thoughtful man will really dispute but that Solomon was right and came to a concise, wise conclusion. Solomon, who had all he could wish from a worldly point of view, was not fully satisfied. He saw and realized that where true religion was lacking, there could be no lasting satisfaction.

He, therefore, concludes that true religion will supply what is void and lacking.

All these men have lived to ripe old age and join in urging us to keep the commandments of God and serve Him. The best and noblest men having the highest ideal of character agree that man is a worshiping creature and that worship can be developed in man and grow into ripe fruitage as naturally as the life sap in the tree develops into delicious fruit.

These men in a high degree represent in their lives and characters what Jesus Christ completely embodied in His person. He was humble and obedient to the Father. He devoted a great deal of time in prayer to Him. He came to fulfill the whole law of God and the prophets. If it was necessary and appropriate for Jesus to do this, how much more for us? Jesus showed His wisdom by knowing the scriptures. He showed His wisdom by quoting from the Bible. He showed His wisdom by living and dying according to the law and prophets.

Where is there an unwise word or action in the whole life of Jesus? Is He not in harmony with nature, with law, and with human life, only without sin of His own?

Peter had experience with the two kinds of fear: one, after he had denied the Master; and the other, after he had repented and was forgiven by Him. Peter's testimony is overwhelmingly in favor of the latter. Paul likewise had the same experience, and his verdict is so firm and assuring that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

John, who had continually been an earnest expounder of the heavenly wisdom and by reason thereof was an exile on Patmos, saw the new Jerusalem with the precious stone foundation and the pearly gates, the gold and crystal, and all that is valuable, and leads our thoughts to precious

things of everlasting nature. It seems that Job and John had their minds on the same things when they were footing up their estimates of things of real value.

With this beautiful and enjoyable in sight, and a possibility of obtaining it, we show wisdom by choosing the best part. Therefore, it is wise to fear God and keep His commandments. It is our whole duty, and gives us an inheritance in the new heaven and the new earth, where there is endless peace and joy, and each one there can finally say: "I am with I AM."

Mysteries are all around us, but the Light shines and reveals them more and more. Man is the image of God and truly represents Him on earth. I Am, the Supreme God, came down into His garden. The bride leans on the strong arm of the Bridegroom through the wilderness. Our elder brother has willed us joint inheritance with Himself. It is wise to choose the best, highest, and noblest; also to love God and men. The sensation of alone and not alone is love, and the realization that I am with I AM is home eternal.

RELIGIOUS BOOKS

THAT STIR THE SOUL



ONE THIRD ACTUAL SIZE

Books worth having. Books that record facts. Books that do good and permanent good. Books that reveal heaven and hell. Books that melt hearts to tears. Books that awaken conviction and WIN SOULS. Books that people love NEXT TO THEIR BIBLES. See list below.

HALF MILLION SOLD

ALL BOOKS ARE UNIFORM IN SIZE, 5 X 8 INCHES

The Great Revival in Wales, Shaw. Compiled, Concise. Complete. Includes full account of Great Revival in Ireland in 1859. In great demand 256 pages.

Cloth 75c Paper 25c

Miracles in the Slums, Rees. Timely, True. Touching. Rightly named. 40 illustrations. Selling fast. 304 pages. Cloth \$1.00

Spiritual Flashlights, Perry. New, Neat, Nothing like it. Selected from hundreds of writers. 153 topics. Alphabetically arranged. 408 pages. Cloth \$1.00

Old Time Religion, Shaw. Primitive, Pathetic, Powerful. Contains accounts of greatest revivals since Pentecost. Stirs hearts, wins souls, and will help to bring about an old time revival. 288 pages.

Cloth \$1.00 paper 35c

Wayside Sketches, Cooke. Bright, Bracing, Biographical. 28 illustrations. 382 pages. Cloth \$1.00

Touching Incidents and Remarkable Answers to Prayer, Shaw. Attractive, Absorbing, Authentic. 300,000 sold. 320 pages. Cloth \$1.00 Paper 35c

Children's Edition of Touching Incidents, Shaw. 42 illustrations. 128 pages. 125,000 sold. Cloth 60c Board 35c

Dying Testimonies of Saved and Un-Saved, Shaw. True, Thrilling, Triumphant. 160,000 sold. 320 pages.

Cloth \$1.00 Paper 35c

The Men Behind the Bars, Sanders. Interesting, Instructive, Illustrated. 320 pages. Cloth \$1.00

God's Financial Plan, Shaw. Searching, Scriptural, Spiritual. Largest sale of any book of its theme ever published. 320 pages. Cloth \$1.00 Paper 35c

Traits of Character, Kletzing. Elevating, Entertaining, Excellent. 180 illustrations. Cloth \$1.00

Any **FOUR** of the above books sent **POST PAID** to one address,
Cloth \$3.00 Paper \$1.10

Any **THREE** of the above books sent **POST PAID** to one address,
Cloth \$2.50 Paper 90c

ONE THOUSAND AGENTS WANTED

WRITE FOR TERMS AND LARGE ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE

Address, S. B. SHAW, Publisher,

212 - 214 W. Chicago Avenue,

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

JUN 2 1995

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2005

PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

B1C
125

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 022 369 4